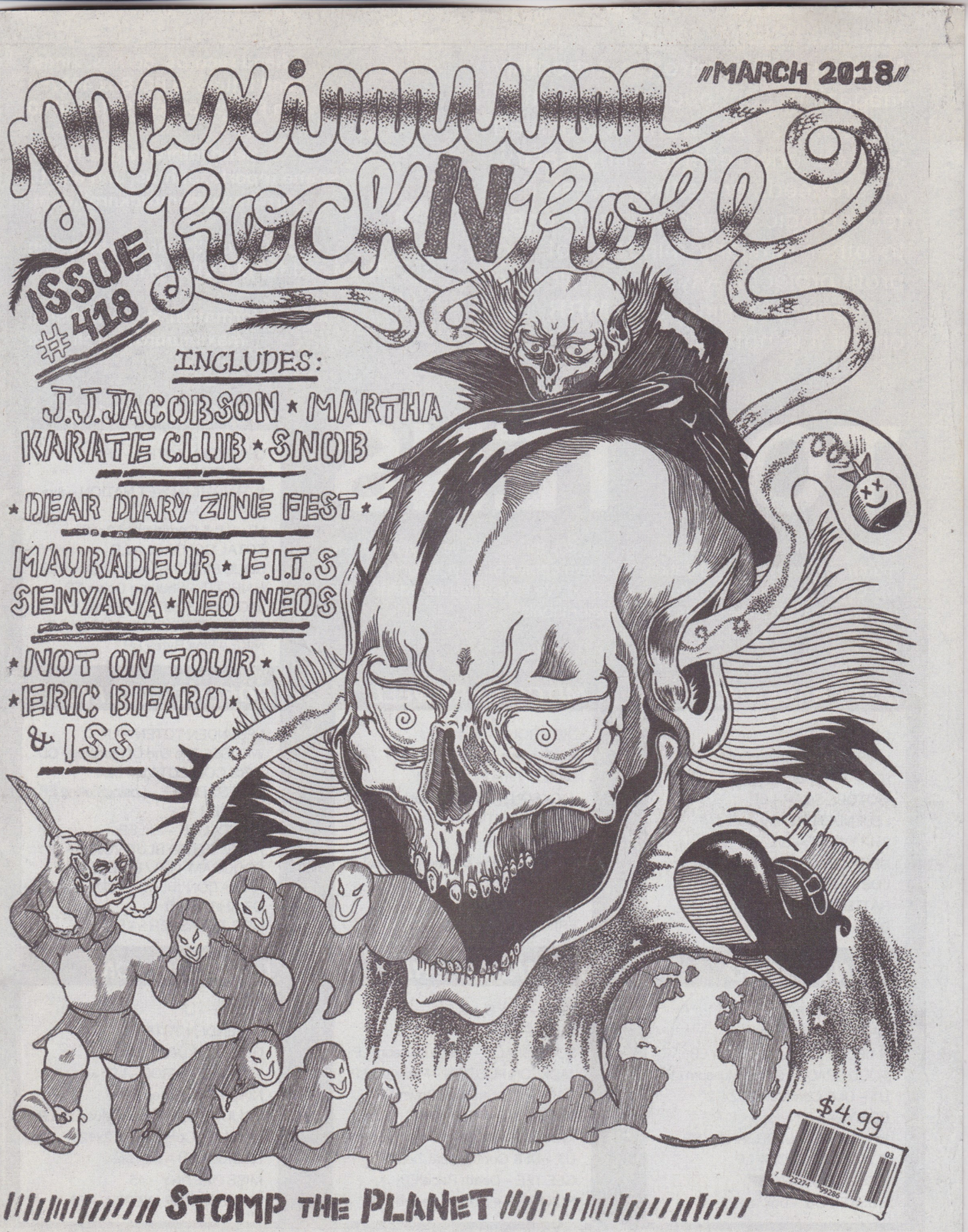
MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
"MARCH 2018"
ISSUE #418
INCLUDES:
J.J.JACOBSON * MARTHA
KARATE CLUB * SNOB
* DEAR DIARY ZINE FEST *
MAURADEUR * F.I.T.S
SENYAWA * NEO NEOS
* NOT ON TOUR *
* ERIC BIFARO *
& ISS
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STOMP THE PLANET

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Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
BB EYE – LP
STRAIGHTJACKET NATION – live
TERRY – live
UT – Ut & Confidential 2x12"
TOTAL CONTROL – LP
SOLID SPACE – Space Museum LP
HAIRCUT – Shutting Down EP
JACKSON POLITICK – Paste V.1 LP
HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE – LP
NIKE – Flea Bytes EP

MATT BADENHOP

DRAMA / NOPES – live
HAIRCUT – Shutting Down EP
ROLF & REVOLTÖRERNA – EP
ISOTOPE SOAP – EP
LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
SHITTY LIFE – S/L EP
NEGAZIONE – Tutti Pazzi EP
LOS KIKES – LP
RÄTTENS KRATER – Urrah! CD
DEVIL MASTER – CS

MITCH CARDWELL

DIE GROUP – live
NIKE – Flea Bytes EP
RAZZ – Time Frames LP
JACKSON POLITICK – Paste V.1 LP
TOTAL CONTROL – LP
FADEAWAYS –45
BOYS ORDER – Do The Wild Cat LP
MISS DESTINY – 45
ISOTOPE SOAP – EP
FRISCO – live

ROBERT COLLINS

LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
WADGE – The End Of Ethnology CD
HIRS COLLECTIVE – flexi
STRESS RELIEF – Losing/Failing EP
MØRDER – LP
SHITTY LIFE – S/L EP
HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE – LP
PROGRAM – EP / BB EYE – LP
RADIATION BLACKBODY / SEA OF SHIT – split
HELLTHRASHER – LP

JOAN DETORO

DEVIL MASTER – CS
LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
HAIRCUT – Shutting Down EP
SOLID SPACE – Space Museum LP
UT – Ut & Confidential 2x12"
BB EYE – LP
ROLF & REVOLTÖRERNA – EP
TOTAL CONTROL – LP
ISOTOPE SOAP – EP
HÜSKER DÜ – box set

MIRANDA FISHER

NIKE – Flea Bytes EP
BB EYE – LP
SOLID SPACE – Space Museum LP
JACKSON POLITICK – Paste V.1 LP
HAIRCUT – Shutting Down EP
WHIP – Weak Flesh EP
ISOTOPE SOAP – EP
UT – Ut & Confidential 2x12"
GEE TEE – Death Race EP
FOX FACE – Spoil + Destroy LP

LAYLA GIBBON

BB EYE – LP
LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
GEE TEE – Death Race EP
TOTAL CONTROL – LP
NIKE – Flea Bytes EP
SOLID SPACE – Space Museum LP
UT – Ut & Confidential 2x12"
HÜSKER DÜ – box set
MISS DESTINY – 45
SOCIEDAD DE MIERDA – EP

GREG HARVESTER

LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
MIXED SIGNALS – CS
ISOTOPE SOAP – EP
DEHIDRATALT FEJEK – CS
ROLF OCH REVOLTÖRERNA – EP
UT – Ut & Confidential 2x12"
JACKSON POLITICK – Paste V.1 LP
SOLID SPACE – Space Museum LP
BB EYE – LP
DADAR – Sick of Pasta EP

RAY LUJAN

DOWZER – CD
BABY SHAKES – Turn It Up CD
COLOR TV – 45
DIRECT HIT / PEARS – split LP
THE LILLINGTONS – CD
HÜSKER DÜ – box set
RAMONAS – CD
RAZZ – Time Frames LP
TRES OUI – LP
THE WINDOWSILL – CD

FRED SCHRUNK

HAIRCUT – Shutting Down EP
COLOR TV – 45
C.H.E.W. / PENETRODE – split EP
WHIP – Weak Flesh EP
LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
BB EYE – LP
SHITTY LIFE – S/L EP
KNOWSO – Look At The Chart LP
HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE – LP
HÜSKER DÜ – box set

KENNY KAOS

DADAR – Sick of Pasta EP
FADEAWAYS – 45
NIKE – Flea Bytes EP
MISS DESTINY – 45
TRES OUI – 12"
THE VIRGINIA GENTLEMEN – EP
UNMANNED BRAIN – EP
LIVING EYES – Modern Living LP
COLOR TV – 45
BOYS ORDER – Do The Wild Cat LP

MARISSA MAGIC

TOTAL CONTROL – LP
BEAST NEST feat. JAIME – live
LAUNDERETTE – live
BB EYE – LP
PLAGUE SURVIVOR – live
GEE TEE – Death Race EP
PLASTIC – LP
NIKE – Flea Bytes EP
UT – Ut & Confidential 2x12"
SOLID SPACE – Space Museum LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

MISS DESTINY – 45
RAZZ – Time Frames LP
ISOTOPE SOAP – EP
FADEAWAYS – 45 / COLOR TV – 45
BB EYE – LP / RED AUNTS – live
FATAL FIGURES – LP
UT – Ut & Confidential 2x12"
HÜSKER DÜ – boxset
COUNT VASELINE – CD
Here To Be Heard film

ROTTEN RON READY

LEBENDEN TOTEN – LP
HÜSKER DÜ – boxset
SOCIEDAD DE MIERDA – EP
MISS DESTINY – 45
ITANSHA – 2012 Demo EP
LION'S SHARE – EP
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This is a contributor-driven magazine. We need help writing reviews, editing, doing layouts, processing mail, maintaining our archive, and more.

Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

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ISSUE #418

Not On Tour. Photo by Missaghast Photography

We are pleased to announce that this issue is the first for our new coordinator, Miranda Fisher. You may know her from her zine *Casting Couch*, which ran for six issues. She moved here from Austin, Texas just two weeks before this issue was due to the publisher. We're thankful to have her here with us.

We're still looking for a distro coordinator. MRR@maximumrocknroll.com for info.

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We will not accept ads from major labels or bands with exclusive distribution through major-owned distros. Information about advertising can be found at maximumrocknroll.com/ads.

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WE WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK

DEAR ~~MRR~~ MMR,

WHY IS EVERYBODY SO EXCITED FOR THE MISFITS REUNION WITH DANZIG? MICHALE GRAVES IS THE ONLY GOOD MISFITS FRONTMAN.

EAT SHIT

-CARL

...EVEN IF YOU ARE WRONG

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LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

Dear *MRR* & Robert Collins (WN),

This is Tony of the Pepper Kings, writing to protest the classification of the lyrics to our song "Shave The Leg" as "misogynistic." That was totally unjustified, unless you are somehow able to explain how a lyric that's very clearly and unambiguously about one *man* shouting at another *man* that *he* ought to shave *his* leg, is in any way anti-female. In fact, I happen to be a very staunch feminist, not to mention a gay guy, who for four years wrote the *Anonymous Boy* column primarily about queer issues for this very magazine that you now write for. There was almost no insult you could have laid on me that cuts deeper than "misogynistic," which was as offensive an accusation as it was untrue.

I might add that while the other dudes in our band are straight, they're no more "misogynistic" than I am. Perhaps you might reflect on the fact that you just automatically presumed surely only women might be asked to shave their legs, and what that might say about your own entrenched gender biases and expectations. I also feel inclined to say that while there were no lyrics included in the EP, it's not really a valid excuse as a diligent reviewer for not bothering to listen more attentively and with a more open mind, considering the fact that I happen to be a vocalist who doesn't sing in a garbled nor indecipherable manner. My decision to enunciate distinctly was intentional. I actually want people to listen, and not just read along with everything served up nice and easy on a silver platter. But, perhaps in the future I'll have to send you guys over at *MRR* a special lyric sheet just for you, whenever we send our next releases in for reviews, as sad as that may seem. You're correct that we do use humor as one tool in are arsenal, but we're most certainly not a "schlock," nor a "joke" band, as this review implied. Furthermore, it wasn't a CD-R demo we sent in, but a commercially produced CD EP, released by an independent punk rock label, called Tarbeach Records, who are also home to the Zips, Heavy Drapes, Reaction, and Giftshop, among others. Nevertheless, although I assert most of that review was insanely off-the-mark, I do need to thank you for the kind words about our song "Blimp Driver." I love that one a lot, so at least that was encouraging to read.

Yours sincerely, in queerness and punk,
Tony of the Pepper Kings

Hi Tony,

Given your history as a writer for Maximum Rocknroll *in the past, I hope that you understand just how often our all-shitworker staff (myself included!) makes mistakes. Even outside of the broader context of* MRR, *many avid listeners can and do frequently misinterpret song lyrics. Who hasn't misheard lyrics to songs by Prince, Pearl Jam, Led Zeppelin, and hundreds of other popular bands? I can only assume that in this situation Robert Collins must have also made a mistake in discerning your lyrics. As far as I understand, he is now in direct communication with you, and I can only assume that the two of you have discussed and resolved this matter between yourselves. While it can be the case for gay men to be misogynist (they aren't exempt due to their gayness—there are many ways that men, no matter their sexuality, create power structures over women and nonbinary people), I am glad to hear that this is not the case with you. Since there is no lyrics sheet included, I will take you at your word for the intention of the lyrics of your song "Shave The Leg."*

To all bands considering submitting their material for review: our reviewers are very human and as such can make mistakes. We have misinterpreted bands' lyrics, imagery, and music in the past, and it is highly likely that we will do so again in the future. To lessen the chances of this happening, please include any information you wish the reviewers to have—lyrics, promo sheets, you name it. We won't turn down artists if they do not submit them; however, their presence will make the reviewers' work slightly easier and their reviews more accurate.

Yours sincerely, in queerness and punk,
Joan DeToro

In our last issue (our Year-End Top Ten issue), we made an error that we need to fix in these pages. We forgot to run three (yes, that's right, three*!) Top Tens from different folks. Our very own Andrew Underwood included his in his column for this issue, but the others do not have the space in these pages to include themselves. Without further ado, here are the other two Top Tens that we forgot to include:*

BEN TROGDON

Ben Trogdon resides in New York City and is the one responsible for the NUTS! *and* Rock 'N' Roll Forever *fanzines, as well as the bands Vanity and Sister Anne*

V/A – flexi (Cretins of Distortion)
I've been craving color and rainbows for the last couple years. The best punk shows are true chaos, and when I look back at them they are so completely colorful! I'm a huge Cretins of Distortion fan and this record feels like finding a rainbow.

POBREZA MENTAL – "Demo 2017" CS (self-released)
Creative, cool, international hardcore punk from our nation's capital, New York.

URCHIN – "Peace Sign" EP (Roach Leg)
URCHIN are lunatics who studied their shit but also truly feel it! Joe, the lead singer, made his own mic stand for this band. He soldered chain links together so they stood upright and attached them to a circular saw blade at the bottom. The homemade stand only lasted a couple shows before he cut a few audience members with the saw blade and decided

to stop using it.

PATSY – "L.A. Women" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Polka dot people outside of society.

SLENDER – "Walled Garden" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
I see a true soul, empty and lying like a dirty sock resting on razor wire.

This list is very US-centric. That's where I live and where I'm from, so this list is easy (or lazy?) for me. But I would love to listen to more international bands! Please send em to me! PO Box 1959, New York, New York 10013 or vegetablesgreen@gmail.com

ALEX LICKTENHOUR

Alex Licktenhour runs Get Better Records, a record label focused on queer punk and indie music.

Each year I feel like I know less and less about new releases other than local Philly bands and shit that comes out on the label. However, I do really love these 2017 records. In no particular order:

LIMP WRIST – "Facades" LP (Lengua Armada / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Fuckin' duh! It's somehow 2017 and LIMP WRIST released a new album. It's perfect. They were the first queer identifying hardcore-punk band I ever heard, and the new record met all every expectation I could have had. I love this record, and I am so happy that this band exists.

HIRS – "How To Stop Street Harassment" flexi (Get Better)
As everyone who knows me knows, I love this band so much. This band and these people are some of the most important and best friends to me. I feel a little weird adding this to my list because I released this and are in the collective/sometimes (well, rarely) play live drums with them… but this record is a great followup to You Can't Kill Us.

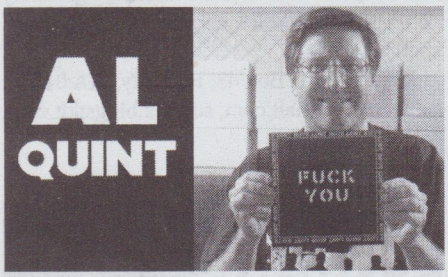
OPEN CITY – "Open City" LP (Open City)
This record is aggressive both musically and lyrically. Open City is one of my favorite current Philly bands. My ex-partner is Dan Yemin's live-in nanny so I was lucky enough to spend some time with Dan aside from sharing a table at the coffee shop to get work done. Dan Yemin is by far one of my favorite songwriters and this band fills the Kid Dynamite hole in my life. Everyone in this band is super fucking sweet and the record only adds to their character.

TANKINI – "Do U Suk" (Get Better)
Probably one of the best pop punk E.P.s reissues from this year. Super fast and catchy riffs and infectious vocal melodies. The band consists of Sadie and Tannrr of G.L.O.S.S. as well as Erica from Margy Pepper. How could you go wrong?

ESCØRT – demo CS (Get Better)
I love this demo so much, and I feel really honored to have released it. This band brings heavy hitting D-beat songs you can't ignore, and I usually am not a huge fan D-beat, because I mostly think it all sounds the same. But this record is real fucking great.

Honorable Mentions:
Cayetana – "New Kind Of Normal" LP (Plum)
Luxe – "demo 2017" CS (self-released0
Career Suicide – "Machine Response" LP (Deranged)
Aye Nako – "Silver Haze" LP

COLUMNS



ROCKING AND WALKING ON THE STRAIGHT EDGE

The title for this column comes from a sticker on the cover of 7 SECONDS' 1988 album *Ourselves* that was put there by their record company. When I sent a photo to Kevin Seconds, he said, "even at my corniest, I couldn't have come up with anything that ridiculous. The first time I saw it, I just about threw up." As bad as that sticker is, the album's contents aren't much better—tepid melodic punk with abysmal, echoey production that was fairly common on late '80s albums. Let's just say it won't make you forget *Skins, Brains & Guts, The Crew* or *Walk Together, Rock Together*. In fact, some opted out with *New Wind* and *Praise*, the latter of which had a decided REM vibe. I thought of that sticker while reading Tony Rettman's latest book, *Straight Edge—A Clear-Headed Hardcore Punk History*, an oral history presentation that traces straight edge back to its roots in the embryonic DC hardcore scene with TEEN IDLES and MINOR THREAT. From there, it delves into three decades of the edge story, and just about all of the major players are heard from—members of YOUTH OF TODAY, UNIFORM CHOICE, INSTED, EARTH CRISIS, JUDGE, CHAIN OF STRENGTH, MOUTHPIECE, TEN YARD FIGHT, and FLOORPUNCH, as well as fanzine publishers and record label people who continue to keep the straight edge banner flying. The subjects talk about how they embraced straight edge and, in some cases, left it behind and what it's meant to them in their lives. Various feuds and beefs are discussed and some mention how they were ostracized after "breaking" their edge—that became particularly true in the early 2000s. It's interesting to read the comments by the old-timers; you get the feeling some of them felt like they might have created something of a monster, something that strayed from the original intent. For instance, John Stabb (RIP) of GOVERNMENT ISSUE said, "straight edge is not a movement to me" and that "Straight Edge" is "a great song but it's a song about anti-obsession...It's not a fucking religion. It's a song." Brian Baker from MINOR THREAT said, "the band didn't brand ourselves a straight edge entity. The idea of having straight edge bands came after us, with the Boston people." Baker's bandmate and Dischord co-founder Jeff Nelson says, "Straight edge became a religion, and it's a very strange feeling to be one of the unwitting founders of this religion."

Indeed, over the years, straight edge increased in militancy and codification in some quarters. As Baker mentions, the Boston bands added a vehemence to their take on straight edge. The philosophy was expanded by some to embrace vegetarianism / veganism and spirituality (Krishna consciousness, in particular). It was taken to ridiculous extremes with the hardline movement (VEGAN REICH, RAID and STATEMENT), which also embraced regressive viewpoints, such as being anti-choice. All eras are covered—from the mid-to-late '80s "youth crew" scene and its revival in the late '90s to the subsequent generations of bands and individuals keeping the flame burning.

There's a discussion of straight edge fashion—an effort to separate from the punk style. It became, in the words of Sammy Siegler (YOUTH OF TODAY, JUDGE, SIDE BY SIDE), "a powerful culture and look, like in hip-hop, in that there was an identifiable look." A certain amount of conformity set in. Ray Cappo from YOUTH OF TODAY described it as, *"a bubble, a scene within a scene that wasn't really interested in anything that wasn't straight edge."* The fashion element has certainly never gone away. Ray's bandmate John Porcelly owns a company called True Till Death Merch that sells clothing with a straight edge theme. The demand is certainly there. Straight edge as a worldwide movement is also covered—straight edge bands and scenes in the UK, Europe, and Scandinavia (Umeå, Sweden, home of REFUSED)—and how a lot of those people faced resistance and hostility from other punks. People from LÄRM talk about how left-wing politics had more of an influence than the straight edge scene in the States. I have to mention one noticeable element—just about every person interviewed is a white male. Only a few non-males are mentioned in the story and Vique Martin, from *Simba* fanzine and Revelation Records, is the only one who speaks at length. And there isn't any mention of LGBT people in straight edge. Perhaps interviewing someone like Martín Sorrondeguy from LOS CRUDOS and LIMP WRIST could have provided some insight about what it was like to be straight edge and gay. That aside, it's an interesting history, a detailed and exhaustive treatment of a subculture that brings a wide variety of reactions and opinions to this day. (Bazillion Points, bazillionpoints.com)

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SAVAGE SOUNDS AND MORE

The *Savage Young Dü* box set is an exhaustive overview of HÜSKER DÜ's early years, spanning from 1979 to 1982, i.e. material up until their SST debut *Metal Circus*. There are different configurations—mine is the four-LP version. There's also another vinyl version that came with a bonus 7" of *Metal Circus* outtakes called *Extra Circus*, but the vinyl version is currently out of print and you can only get it on CD or a digital download, so that kind of sucks. Pity because the songs are raw, visceral rage, save for the early version of "Standing By The Sea," which would show up on *Zen Arcade* and the somewhat more melodic "Won't Change" (which came out on a couple of compilations in the '80s). I hope they do a repress, but I'm not holding my breath. There's also a three-CD version, and all come with a hardcover book filled with photos, flyers, and detailed information on the recording sessions, as well as a lengthy essay telling the story of their savage young years. It's quite an impressive package.

Getting to the four records, the first features early demos and live tracks and shows a band working on finding an identity. "Do You Remember?," "Sore Eyes," "Sexual Economics," and an early version of "Do The Bee" (which is very rough sounding) are good snotty punk rousers. But it's wildly hit and miss. The demo of "Data Control" is inferior to the live version on *Land Speed Record* (more on that later). Definitely some skip-over tracks—their mid-tempo poppy songs hadn't really gelled yet; "Outside" is an exception, a mesh of stinging guitar work and endearing ragged harmonizing.

Record two of four is also on the haphazard side, although it gets off to a great start with

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the sturdy post-punk of their debut single "Statues." "Writer's Cramp" and "Let's Go Die" are both sharply catchy. But other songs suffer from substandard sound quality and, once again, things hadn't completely gelled. There's a good reason why many of those songs didn't last long in the set list. The early, deconstructed version of *Metal Circus*'s "Wheels" is done as tense, moody, dirge with repetitive keyboards, far-removed from the chugging arrangement on *Everything Falls Apart.*

Things took a 180-degree turn for their first 12" release, *Land Speed Record.* It's a live recording that shows the band hammering out blistering high-velocity thrash, seldom taking a break between songs. However, it's not the original version of the album that came out first on New Alliance and later SST (no doubt due to licensing issues). This comes from a show taped two weeks after the one that was on the original release and holds its own quite well. It's a bit cleaner, and the set list is the same with the exception of three songs—"Do The Bee," "Tired of Doing Things" and "Data Control," all of which appear elsewhere on the box. As I said, it's a shame about "Data Control," because that was a show-stopper—a slower, bashing, conclusion to the speedy mania that precedes it. However, there are five songs from the second set they played the night of the original recording, and it includes an early version of *Metal Circus*'s "Diane." The songs are much more tuneful, a harbinger of what's to follow. That really started with the *In A Free Land* EP. It's a slightly different mix from the original 7", but the title song remains one of their all-time greats. A politically-charged, speedy anthem with a knockout chorus and guitar line. The two other songs are in a *LSR* vein, and there are two outtakes of songs that'd end up on their *Everything Falls Apart* album, blazing renditions of "Target" and "Signals From Above."

Finally, the last disc is a remastered version of the aforementioned *Everything Falls Apart,* along with half a dozen unreleased live tracks, including three live versions of *Metal Circus* songs. "Travel In Opposite Car" is a tuneful track that should have been done in the studio. *EFA* solidified the transition (or yin and yang, if you will) of their balancing hardcore savagery with blatantly poppier compositions like the title track and "Gravity." Even the harder hitting tracks (well, all the songs here are hard-hitting) offered glimpses of melody—the guitar line between verses of "From The Gut," for instance. It set the stage for what would follow, at least up through *Zen Arcade*—a smorgasbord of high energy punk, pop and hardcore.

Obviously, this box is only one chapter of the HÜSKER story, and not everything will hold up to repeated listening. I'd recommend *Zen Arcade* for novices. While not everyone will want to shell out the high price, the set is still a vital history lesson, a treasure trove for lifelong fans. It shows HÜSKER DÜ going from a hodgepodge of styles into something focused and highly influential. (Numero Group, numerogroup.com)

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There's an international group of bands in the latest crop of releases from Not Like You. The *Rough Crowd* 7" is the vinyl debut from Massachusetts band LAUGHING STOCK, who have been around four years at this point; manic hardcore with cavernous production and it makes me think back in time to the Mystic Records compilations or the old Toronto band YOUTH YOUTH YOUTH (look 'em up if you've never heard them). There are a few double-speed rhythms, as well as melodic touches, singeing leads and even a split-second skank on "Just My Luck." Not bad at all.

STALEPHISH's *Pole Jams* provides some peppy, up tempo, skate-themed punk. Musically, this reminds me of the '90s-era melodically-inclined bands. Not GREEN DAY-type swill but music of the snottier variety, something that might have been on the Johann's Face or VML labels. Energetic, with hearty backups, although nothing all that distinctive. And what's up with the hip-hop pisstake at the end?

I haven't heard a ton of quality hardcore out of the state of Maine over the years but here come COMBATANT to raise holy hell on their *Sick Plot* 7". Mean, full-speed-ahead old-school bile with meat cleaver riffs and in-the-pocket arranging, along with bellicose vocals and sentiments. The production brings out the power without being too slick. Yeah, it's by the books, but with a savage edge. (Not Like You, notlikeyourecords.com). Finally, Australian old-timers VICIOUS CIRCLE are back with their latest album *Born To Destroy*, although they've never really gone away. In the 16 page, full-size lyric book that accompanies this record, vocalist / guitarist Paul Lindsay states that, "hardcore, punk, to me, is a way of life. Of being that I carry with me." And, after more than thirty years as a band, the sound is as vital as ever, as is the message. The lyrics speak out against injustices and life's obstacles and tribulations, while also trying to maintain an upbeat, self-empowering attitude. Rough and tumble hardcore, punctuated by Paul's super-gruff vocals, a few metallic licks here and there and executed in bare-knuckled fashion. Long may they rage.

Speaking of Australian bands, a couple of ex-VAGINORS play in the loud, fast'n'nasty UGLIES, who have just unleashed their first 12", *Keeping Up With The Uglies*. Instead of the loopy punknoxiousness of VAGINORS, the UGLIES stick to meat and potatoes ass-kicking hardcore punk. No wank, no bullshit—although there's a sick bass run on "(I Got No) Self-Control." No suffering of fools, either; that comes out most-blatantly in "Make Punk Great Again"—i.e. it's not so much an anti-Trump protest as telling privileged so-called punks to fuck off. And that's just for starters. Ugly and proud? Where have I heard that before? Pure malevolence, gleefully delivered. (Nopatience, nopatiencerecords.bandcamp.com)

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PUNK FASHION

I organized my wardrobe on a sleepy, gray Sunday in December and it revealed an embarrassing amount of slightly oversized black band t-shirts. Somehow, I've kept this clean and organized for a few weeks with shirts in piles I've mentally labelled as follows: cut-off sleeves, big shirts that need a scissors-and-thread session, sleeves still attached, and tank tops. All waiting for me to pick the shirt that'll accompany *the* perfect punk outfit.

This column has grown from being a Scandinavian / European touch in the otherwise very American-focused MRR to me diving into studying what punk is, what punk definitely isn't, and if punk is alive and kicking or a dead fish floating belly up in the sea. To write about punk in general I guess I have to figure out what it actually is. I'd like to claim that no one knows what punk is. And those who claim to know are mistaken.

Punk probably wasn't ever meant to be defined and put in a box. Actually, that sounds very un-punk. So I'll put that in the "definitely not punk" category. Yet I believe that we as self-defined punks seek to visually signal to the world and to fellow punks that we are punk. A visual expression consists of both aesthetics and information hiding in the cues and signs an expression portrays. Punk fashion and style are visual expressions that you belong to punk.

Punk fashion can both be used to show that you belong in the punk community but also to show that you disassociate with society. Wearing a shirt with an obscure Japanese band

obviously caters to a certain punk crowd, while wearing a studded vest is also a way to show everybody that you differ from the dominant fashion values in society. Most likely this is why mainstream "punk aesthetic" clothes are disapproved of by the majority of punks; if punk fashion is a reaction to the ideals of mainstream society, it loses its value when the mainstream society suddenly adapts it and claims it as its own. To me though, while punk fashion belongs to punk and not H&M, punk is a part of society. I bet we've all had a dream of disconnecting ourselves completely from society and moving to an isolated utopian punk island. But punk was bred by society, punk is the product of society, and punk is still a part of society. The safety pin punched through society's earlobe that indicates that society isn't picture perfect, and that there are alternatives to the conformity-driven ideals society imposes on us. Punk is counter-culture, but still a part of society.

Living in Scandinavia, there aren't many consequences of embracing punk fashion. There's no denying that having a certain style that differs from the masses will make you the target of bullying and such, as nowhere is bully free—hey, not even punk is. But you can get along nearly anywhere without having to alter your visual punk appearance. You won't have to cover up face piercings with a mask, colored hair with a wig or tattoos with long sleeves even on melting hot summer days to go to work. And there's no fear of a repressive state sending out its representatives to shave off your mohawk and confiscate your clothing. Diversity and personal freedom is heavily celebrated here. Naturally, having a visual appearance that stands out from the crowd will draw attention, both good and bad. Admittedly, living in a big city, Copenhagen punks don't receive the same negative reactions as those living in rural areas and suburbs do. Nevertheless, punk life and claiming a punk style in Scandinavia is smooth. You can get away with not wearing the uniforms of a narrow-minded society.

Punk has uniforms too. I'm sure when I say "punk style," a certain image immediately pops up in your mind. An image that'll be adapted if I narrow in punk with words such as Oi!, horror, crust or skate. Even within punk, there are visual expression to show that you belong to a certain subculture of punk. Expressions that the common person will most likely not get, but expressions that have a great value within punk. Heck, in some places punks still fight each other because they belong to different subcultures of punk.

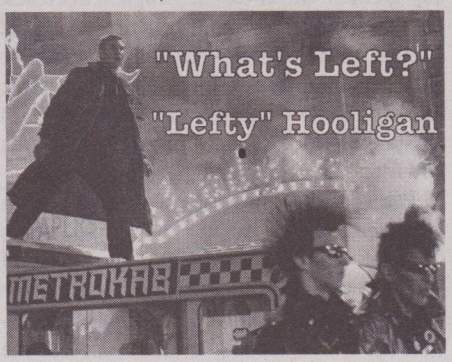
I recently read an interview with women who got into punk in the late '70s, which got me thinking about punk fashion and punk uniforms. One thing they discuss is the rejection of feminine beauty ideals and the appreciation of women who don't have and / or want the appearance that these ideals dictate. This can also be seen as either the rejection of femininity versus challenging what a woman should look like. One example was to take fishnets, that already have a certain value, and rip them to put it in a new context. I.e. something that's viewed as sexy is destroyed but is worn both to protest the ideal that women should be sexy and to put sexy in a new context and to challenge what's considered sexy.

Reading about those experiences, I realized that the standard punk uniform is in many ways genderless and androgynous, but in a manner where mostly traditionally masculine ideals are embraced. While having a communal genderless style is legitimate, I often see this done by rejecting all traditionally feminine ideals and only adopting traditionally masculine ideals. While hardly anyone raised to live under masculine ideals adopts any traditionally feminine traits. So in a way, this becomes a rejection of the female and a blind acceptance of the male. I hardly think anyone in the punk scene would frown if they encountered someone with a female identity with a shaved head and a studded military vest. But someone with a male identity wearing a dress to a show would cause glares anywhere.

Is it that femininity is even considered fragile and inferior in punk? A place where anyone should be allowed to claim any gender identity freely and not live under any norms for how they should appear depending on their gender identity. Just as society instructs what female beauty is, punk is rejecting certain beauty standards and labelling them as wrong and "not punk" and thereby creating its own standards and ideals, which essentially are repressive. Instead of embracing the idea that beauty is diverse and no appearances are wrong. Mindlessly having to follow a beauty or fashion ideal, whether it's imposed by society, punk, or anyone else, is problematic. And assuming that someone is repressed by society's ideals based on whether they shave their armpits or not is degrading and offensive. Let's support the freedom to choose to dress however you want. In this world, unfortunately, someone with a female identity making a choice for themselves is powerful in itself, and not more or less powerful depending on which choice is made.

One thing I often hear that really gets my blood boiling is that women in punk looking a way that society would probably view as "pretty" or "hot" are making other women feel inferior, less pretty, or that their bodies are "wrong." That statement is downright bullshit. Women in crop tops at punk shows aren't making other women insecure about themselves. Society is. Society is the one dictating that certain bodies are "wrong," "too big" or "too small." Society has taught us to constantly compare our bodies to the bodies of others. You can't solve those issues by censoring how people should look and dress or by criticizing those looking or dressing a certain way. That way, you are supporting society's way of portraying bodies and beauty as either right or wrong. Instead, challenge how beauty is perceived; challenge society's ideals. Support that no bodies are wrong or inferior.

Punk fashion is abandoning the uniforms others impose on you and claiming your own identity.



Comrade.

The word conjures up images of Lenin and Stalin in heroic poses, May Day parades and the Red Army marching, red stars and red flags on proud display, the usual Cold War Soviet iconography. But the original word in Russian—*tovarisch*—simply means "friend." A century of anti-Communist hysteria has turned it into an ironic epithet, an evocation of Satan, and a "tell" for fellow travelers. A mirror process among Leftists has turned it into a term of endearment, a signifier of solidarity, and a way to differentiate regular friends from people who have one's back.

So, who do I consider my comrades?

I have a half dozen close personal friends, my wife included, who I would qualify with the term comrade. Most of them share my generally Leftist politics, and beyond these individuals I reserve the term for political people, groups, organizations, and tendencies on the left of the Left. In this category is much of the anarchist / ultra-left anti-authoritarian milieu that I regularly take to task in this column. I consider these comments comradely criticisms, for the most part, focused on problematic Leftist practice like sectarianism, looking for the next big thing, viewing the enemy of one's enemy as one's friends, etc. Embedded in these critiques of practice, however, have been criticisms of equally troublesome Leftist political theory. Two

abiding, yet equally thorny Leftist political stances I dealt with in *MRR* #415 were anti-imperialism and anti-fascism, which have been "standard issue" on the orthodox Left since the 1930s but which have become part of the warp and woof of that anti-authoritarian milieu only since the 1960s.

Ideally then, I should offer comradely criticism to the anarchist / ultraleft while much more harshly critiquing the mainstream Left. As I consider politics further to the right—from progressives and liberals to moderates and conservatives, and ultimately to reactionaries and fascists—I should move away from criticism altogether into an unapologetic attack mode. Unfortunately, it's frequently the case that I've reserved my greatest vitriol for the people I'm closest to politically. I've defined individuals and groups as my enemy with barely one degree of separation between their politics and mine, and I've sadly embraced the ancient proverb of statecraft that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" a time or two myself.

Perhaps the most famous example of considering the enemy of one's enemy as one's friend was the Sino-Soviet Split circa 1960. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) slavishly followed the Soviet Union's lead from its founding in 1921 through the beginning of civil war with Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang party (KMT) in 1927 to Mao's rise to leadership of the CCP during the Long March from 1934-35. After Japan's invasion of China in 1937, Mao increasingly disobeyed Stalin's instructions regarding the tactics and strategy the Soviet Union insisted the CCP follow during the second World War. Stalin wanted Mao to engage in more conventional military campaigns in the field while fighting against the occupying Japanese or engaging the KMT in civil war, even going so far as to advise that Mao form a joint anti-Japanese "united front" with Chiang. Mao did neither, instead continuing his guerrilla war on all fronts while remaining holed up in liberated, "sovietized" Yunnan province.

After WWII and the CCP's seizure of power, Mao heeded the ideological line of his Soviet patrons and followed the Soviet model of centralized economic development, which emphasized building heavy industry while deferring consumer goods production. But Mao was already skeptical of Marxist-Leninist ideology, in which factory workers were exalted and peasants were denounced as reactionary. Mao eventually argued that traditional Leninism was rooted in industrialized European society and so could not be applied to Asian peasant societies, requiring instead the forging of a unique Chinese road to socialism, a socialism with Chinese characteristics adapted to Chinese conditions. Stalin's Soviet Union was thus hell-bent on creating an industrial working class on a mountain of Russian corpses whereas Mao's PRC extolled the peasantry on a comparable mountain of Chinese corpses.

Stalin pushed forced collectivization of Soviet agriculture and heavy industrialization of the economy, developed a cult of personality, and insisted on international Communist unity ideologically, politically, economically, and militarily in a direct confrontation against the capitalist West. When he died in 1953 (as what Mao characterized as "the only leader of our party"), Sino-Soviet relations enjoyed a brief "golden age" of increased political and economic cooperation and international collaboration until Khrushchev's "secret speech" in 1956. In that speech, Khrushchev denounced Stalin's cult of personality and excessive state terror in a bid to de-Stalinize the Communist Party and Soviet society. In the process he announced a new policy of "peaceful co-existence" with the capitalist West. The suppression of the 1956 Hungarian uprising made clear how the USSR under Khrushchev intended to deal with any deviation from the new Soviet line.

Mao's immediate response to the Soviet Union's new direction under Khrushchev was to launch The Great Leap Forward in 1958. Small agricultural collectives were merged into huge People's Communes, which practiced Lysenko-inspired farming techniques, undertook massive infrastructure projects, and attempted decentralized backyard iron smelting and steel production. The results were disastrous. The Chinese economy was reduced to shambles, and a massive famine killed between 20 and 45 million Chinese in four years. Mao was temporarily eclipsed in the CCP's leadership, but his growing animosity toward Khrushchev's Soviet Union and its peaceful coexistence stance became the party line.

The PRC denounced the USSR as "traitorous revisionists," "social-imperialists," and "capitalist roaders" and was in turn called "ultraleft adventurists," "crypto-Trotskyites," "nationalists," and "anti-Marxist deviationists.' By the time of the Rumanian Communist Party Congress of 1960, only the Albanian CP sided with China, while most other CPs remained loyal to the Soviet Union. The PRC and the USSR then formally broke relations in 1962, took opposing sides on a variety of international issues (Vietnam, India, Indonesia, the Cultural Revolution, Taiwan, the Cuban missile crisis, Cambodia, nuclear disarmament, etc.), and fought a brief border war in 1968-69. As national liberation struggles raged around the globe, they all too frequently became civil wars, with the PRC and the USSR supporting rival factions. This was exemplified when, in Angola, the Soviets backed the Leninist MPLA while China backed the pro-American reactionary UNITA. But the crowning example of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" remains the PRC's rapprochement with the United States between 1971-72, culminating in Nixon shaking hands with Mao in Beijing in 1972.

I've related the story of Tim Yohannan's December 1993 Great Purge of Jeff Bale specifically and *Maximum Rocknroll* generally several times before, most recently in issue #299 and #375. Consider it now in light of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." No need to repeat myself here other than to say I deliberately exposed Larry Livermore's bogus pretensions to democratic socialism and provoked him into becoming my enemy. As Larry publicly ruminated in the pages of *MRR* about whether to quit as a columnist over Tim's firing of Jeff I wrote Larry a letter calling him a weak, waffling liberal whose absence from the magazine would not be missed and please not to let the punk rock door hit his sorry ass on the way out. Larry compared me to his oft-used literary device, Spike Anarky, to argue that I represented the worst of the hardcore Left while he tendered his resignation to *MRR*. From that day on I used my column to belittle, criticize, attack, and denounce him and his politics every chance I got. I even wrote a fake *MRR* Larry Livermore column about him meeting Spike Anarky who, like him, had sold out his punk rock soul.

I didn't stop there, however. I looked for allies—potential friends that were the enemy of my enemy—to wreak some havoc, everything from encouraging the acrimony between Larry Livermore and David Hayes to fantasizing about coaxing a few crusties I knew to fuck Larry's shit up, all to no avail. Definitely mean-spirited and perhaps a bit obsessive, I have neither excuse nor guilt. I still think Larry is a dick and a sellout, but I stopped wasting time and energy on the asswipe decades ago. It took me a while longer to curtail my knee jerk reactions and realize that the enemy of my enemy is often equally as fucked up. Next time, I'll detail a more elaborate example of the proverb as I illustrate yet one more problem of questionable Leftist behavior.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA

Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com
Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
Website aggregator: gamatiasz.com
Publishing website: 62milepress.com
Facebook profile: facebook.com/georgematiasz
Facebook writer page: facebook.com/gamatiasz
Personal Instagram: @gamatiasz
Book Instagram: @onepercentfree

UNDETECTABLE PART 2

As we established last time, some people are more at risk than others for contracting HIV, and some people are more likely than others to follow through to treatment and become undetectable. Black Americans are far more likely to acquire HIV than any other population. Only about 14% of America is Black, but Black Americans account for more than 44% of the population living with HIV. Men who have sex with men (MSM) are still at much greater risk of becoming HIV positive than anyone else. MSM exposure accounts for 61% of all new HIV infections in the US, but MSM represent only about 2% of the population. You don't need to do any calculations to know that gay Black men are at an exponentially greater risk for contracting HIV than any other population.

The CDC estimates that 5% of Black men will become infected in their lifetimes. That's compared to 0.75% for white men. And while more than 2% of black women will be infected with HIV in their lifetime, 0.11% of white women will get the virus. Latino men who have sex with men have three times the infection rate as white Americans. Sorry for kicking a dead horse here, but these disparities are enormous.

So do Black and Latino men who have sex with men partake in riskier behaviors than their white counterparts? That's one theory that these numbers point to, and because nearly all HIV prevention efforts are based on changing risky behavior, you'd think this would be what's driving HIV infections. But as it turns out, there's no data to back up this assumption.

You know this whole "down low" Hollywood trope about gay and bisexual black men stepping out and bringing the virus back to their wives or girlfriends? And how in the movies it's always because of some deep-seated internalized homophobia that somehow thrives only in black communities? Well as it were, this stereotype is all bark and no bite. Thirty years into this epidemic, scientists are finally beginning to debunk this narrative.

Unprotected anal intercourse carries the highest risk of infection, so variations in the rate of unprotected anal sex along racial lines could account for the discrepancy in HIV. However, fifteen independent studies conducted in the past twenty years found no significant differences in unprotected anal sex between racial or ethnic groups. Nor did they find that Black men who have sex with men were more likely than other MSM to engage in high-risk sexual practices. Additionally, most studies found that Black men who have sex with men have fewer sexual partners on average than white MSM.

That isn't to say that homophobia and stigma don't play a role in HIV. There are volumes of studies that show that the more stigma associated with an identity or an act, the higher the risk of negative outcomes. And studies have found that white MSM are more likely to publicly identify as gay or disclose their status than MSM of other races—though privilege likely accounts for this phenomenon. Disclosure could definitely play a role in the transmission of HIV. But statistically, this is not a major fuel-source of the HIV epidemic among any population.

Okay, enough about what *isn't* driving the HIV disparity. Now for the answer you've all been waiting for: the primary reason that there is such a huge racial disparity in the HIV rate is not behavioral, genetic, or biological. It's sociological. Russell Robinson and Aisha C. Moodie-Mills said it better than I can: "The glaring health inequities revealed by the distribution of HIV / AIDS demonstrate that race is a social index of isolation and impoverishment, disregard, and disempowerment rather than a proxy for divergent sexual attitudes or behaviors—much less genetic traits."

Social determinants of health are the circumstances in a person's environment or background that frame the narrative of their life. It's these elements that have the biggest influence on a person's life and that are the strongest predictors of health outcomes. Factors that are beyond a person's control—political, socioeconomic, geographic, your age, what you look like, your family structure, etc—these things are what influence a person's risk for not just HIV, but lots of other chronic and acquired illnesses.

So behavioral campaigns, like condoms or abstinence, are ineffective because they do nothing to level the playing field. In order to reduce the spread of HIV and reduce the gap between races, the WHO recommends "tackling inequitable distribution of power and wealth" in the US. Let's walk through a few different ways this plays out. The following data comes from Robinson and Moodie-Mills' article, "HIV / AIDS Inequality: Structural Barriers to Prevention, Treatment, and Care in Communities of Color."

Sex Education: Let's talk about culturally appropriate, comprehensive sex education programs in schools. You know, the ones that acknowledge any sex act other than PinV? Or ones that talk about PrEP and PEP? Just kidding, those don't exist.

Geography: People living in the south have less access to HIV testing, are more likely to get HIV, and are less likely to get early treatment after acquiring HIV. When I say "the south," I'm including Washington, DC, which has the highest prevalence of HIV in the nation at 1.9%. (Quick sidebar, as a former Washingtonian I know that DC is not actually "the south," but the CDC doesn't.) People of color living in the south are five times more likely to have significant medical complications after being infected with HIV. There are fewer harm reduction programs in the south, less comprehensive sex education, and higher rates of incarceration, all of which contribute to more HIV diagnoses. There's also a lot of stigma in the south. Many southerners, particularly the churchy ones, report that they would delay testing and treatment of STIs out of embarrassment.

Housing: People living in minority, low-income communities are less likely to get early treatment for HIV. This can have a big impact because, as I mentioned last month, viral load is highest in the first six months of acquiring the virus. There's less access to quality health services, there's less infrastructure, and there's less money. There's a lot more incarceration.

But beyond these obvious factors, segregated communities have a smaller social network—and let's not kid ourselves, America is still segregated AF. Just like an individual person has an HIV viral load, the community also has a viral load. The cumulative viral loads of all people living with HIV in an area are the community viral load. There's a direct correlation between community viral load and risk of transmission.

There's also a developing theory among researchers that factors such as violence, high unemployment, and high incarceration rates effectively limit the number of eligible Black men that are romantically available to both Black men and women in racially segregated communities. According to Robinson and Moodie-Mills, this can cause an inequitable distribution of power in relationships and allow less leverage for partners to negotiate condom use and other safer sex measures.

Healthcare: All right, well, A) racial wealth gap, unemployment, incarceration, homelessness, health insurance, Medicaid, safety nets. All obvious reasons why people would have less access to testing and treatment. But there's even more at play here mucking up the system. In a 2010 study published in *The Journal of AIDS, Patient Care, and STDs*, the

authors stratified adherence to Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) by levels of self-reported trust in their physicians: "African-American patients also express lower levels of trust in health care providers than do white patients. Lower trust in health care providers is in turn associated with fewer HIV-related health care visits and lower acceptance and use of ART. We also found that trust was associated with ART adherence and that disparities in adherence were of lower magnitude when African-American patients expressed complete trust in their providers." (Saha et al.)

Perhaps the real problem is not that people don't trust their physicians, it's that physicians are *doing a bad job*. The medical system is failing poor people, people of color, immigrants, queer people, trans people, women, drug users, ex-convicts, etc. And the onus is being placed on the wrong party. Clinicians aren't doing enough to reach people, to diversify the workforce, to be compassionate, or to even have a non-judgemental attitude toward their patients. I'll resume this tirade another time.

Incarceration: We all know that mass incarceration disproportionately targets people of color, specifically Black men. 2.3 million Americans are incarcerated each year, and the majority of them are Black or Latinx. Seventeen percent of America's incarcerated population is living with HIV. The average prevalence of HIV in the general US population is less than 1%. Incarcerated and recently incarcerated people also have higher rates of STIs than the general population. Untreated STIs increase the risk of acquiring HIV.

After being convicted of a crime, many if not all government benefits are terminated. It's nearly impossible to find a job or a place to rent with a felony on your record. Can you even imagine staying adherent to your daily HIV treatment while having to deal with this shit? People are often given 30 days of their meds when they get out, if they're lucky. That gives you exactly one month to get insured, find a provider who will take your state-issued insurance, and attend at least one appointment. That's absurd.

There are also a fair number of people who acquire the virus while in state custody. Most prisons and jails in Western Europe and even some former Soviet bloc countries have needle exchange programs inside their prisons for this reason. We don't have this in the US. In a lot of states, you can't even get condoms in jail. Gimme a fucking break, Uncle Sam.

Also, HIV exposure laws. Thirty-six states in the US have laws on the books that penalize people for transmitting HIV to someone else. In some places, you can even be charged with manslaughter. In Iowa, one guy who was virally undetectable (remember: this means you can't transmit the virus sexually) went to jail for having sex with a guy who didn't even get the virus. And he wore a condom. The UN condemns these laws, saying that they "exacerbate the structural forces shaping the HIV epidemic and do not effectively prevent the transmission of HIV."

Immigration: Immigrants, specifically undocumented immigrants, really have the cards stacked against them here. Talk about mistrust of the medical system. How can you expect people to pay insane out-of-pocket costs to go get tested and treated while risking getting busted by ICE, getting deported, and being separated from their loved ones forever? And what about non-English speaking parents that need their kids or family members to translate between themselves and their doctor? So much for confidentiality. And maybe you come from a place or a family where homosexuality is taboo, but you're worried about a potential non-hetero exposure? Yeah, good luck with that.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of the social determinants of getting HIV care, but it is a start. This mini-series will continue next month. Stay safe out there in this cold cold world.

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WE ONLY CAME TO DANCE

I tell ya, I hate when bands reinvent the proverbial wheel. One, they never actually reinvent the wheel, they just missed the Punk 201 class where we covered arty use of saxophone and sass. Two, the product is usually wack if not simply underwhelming. Great! It's a new thing that isn't very good. But magazines like *MRR* frolic behind whatever nude emperor is in power at the moment, playing the flute to honor their *beeeutiful* raiment that is actually just a warty ass. Blorf!

And you! Punk alchemists! You pass us slugs that've had the *punk* extracted from the punk—and thrown it away!—and you've reconstituted the slag with bleeps and bloops and DayGlo socialist realism and then you call that *thing* punk. But we know you! And we name you! Charlatan! Flimflammer! Hoaxer! Mountbank! We think your "new" wheel looks like shit and all the flags and glitter you attach in the name of ego and self-idolatry makes it suitable for nothing but the ploppiest of jalopies.

And as yer stuck on the side of the road with yer five-wheeled cuddle-puddle / rat-king clunker of a genre, here approaches Oi! Rolling forward, stable on wheels that've been made from pride and blood and boots and Wahl brand clippers and dignity and strength of character and God damned flight jackets *consistently* for 40 fucking years! Gotdamn! Oi! carries on! Oi! carries on! Oi! carries on!

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B-SQUADRON – *Sons of Tigers* LP (Rebellion): Who let them babies out?! Leicester City's elite are back with their debut full length! This is solid UK aggro Oi! The band has said they draw reference from the classics like COCKNEY REJECTS, COMBAT 84, and the 4 SKINS—"Rapist" and "Evil" are covered on the album. The recording is a tad thin at times, but overall it adds to the raw nature of the songs. No gloopy streetpunk found here. Tales are tough on *Sons of Tigers*. "Means of Escape" is a solid anthem for all hard working folk, not just skins: *"No Ben Shermans, no boots nor braces / No shaven head / Just angels with dirty faces / And we're bootboys born and bred! / Working class kids from the dirty back streets and the council estate / Football, boxing, Oi! Oi! music is our means of escape!"* Also of note is the song "This Is England," which is a blazing, full-on channeling of CHAOS UK spirit of '84 no future punk. Brilliant. There's not a lacking tune found among the twelve songs that make up *Sons of Tigers*.

Their previous EP, *Saturday's Soldiers*, is here in full although all songs were re-recorded and repositioned so it fits in seamlessly with the new material. All in B-SQUADRON rightfully earn their place in the second golden age of UK Oi!

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BOOT RACK – *Boots on tha Rack demo* (Eat Em Up): BOOT RACK is the studio project of Jan Quackenbush, who runs the label and store Eat Em Up Records in Winnipeg, Manitoba. What's being offered up is five tracks of near perfect sensitive-shithead garage-y rock'n'roll. Equal parts RIFF RAFF era BILLY BRAGG and Stiff Records pub rock folded into a mixture of '90s NJ Oi! / bar punk like THOSE UNKNOWN / NIBLICK HENBANE and glazed with a Bill Owens / Bill McFadden forlorn raspy reduction (stretching this metaphor out like taffy!) If you own a beat up baseball cap navigate over to eatemuprecords.bandcamp.com to listen and support. Possible tape in the future.

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BROKEN HEROES – *Make Oi! Great Again* CD (Step-1 Music): BROKEN HEROES from NJ have been operating under

one lineup or another for twenty-five years. I'm conflicted about this release; *Make Oi! Great Again* contains some solid NJ Oi! that is as strong as the band's early Headache Records output, while at the same time much of the album is cliché, stupid, and boring. Let's dig in.

First, the title is eye roll-inducing. The play on Trump's tagline doesn't bother me, what really gets me is that it's not even apt! Oi! has been going thru a heavy resurgence for the past decade—not just the past three years like the civilians think. But more so, it was never bad! It's always been great. It's like oldos thinking rock'n'roll died with LED ZEPPELIN. "They don't make music like they used to..." Get a clue gwampa!

Secondly, a lot of the lyrical content is lazy. "Beer Run," "Violence is the Answer," "15 Pints (And You're Still Ugly)," "Working Class Slob" are the most egregious offenders. Drinking habits play a large role on *MOGA*. This is shit that should be left to the new breed and youthful indiscretion. Listening to 50-year-old dudes go on about living at the bar, getting into fights, and regretting romantic choices is fodder for an AA meeting. Give Oi! a break and call your sponsor. You know what happens when you get into a fight on the sidewalk? You get charged with assault. I'd listen to a song about that. And another thing! I don't know a "working class slob" that wouldn't be offended if you called them a slob. *"Hero to no one, yet burden to none / He's got his pride, yeah, he doesn't run / Never backs down even knowing that he'll lose / Just nurses his scars with another pint of booze / He's a working class / He's a working class / He's a working class slob like you / He's a working class slob like us!"* I wish this was satire. Society puts us in a cage and these dopes wanna gild the bars?! Fuck! One of the things that attracted me to Oi! and the skinhead subculture was the mindset of "I ain't thick, it's just a trick." Pricks can think what they like, but we know the truth about ourselves. Sure I might act like a dummy, but I ain't dumb. To paraphrase Voldemort, does life mean go out, complain and get drunk so you can ignore the problems? Cuz if that's what life means to you, that's a waste.

Musically, *MOGA* is mostly strong. Two of the songs, "This Aint for You," and "Overnight Love Affair" feature the HUB CITY STOMPERS for a surprisingly un-cringey dose of ska-Oi! Comparisons to the BOSSTONES come to mind, which I'm okay with in small doses. And as I said above, BROKEN HEROES continue to carry the banner of NJ Oi! and Headache Records style rocknroll into the 21st century. Stand out tracks like "Murder on my Mind," "Something Special," "Aint No Good," and "We Never Run" showcase the enduring spirit of this unique scene. I might just tape the good and leave off the rest.

The LP will be out early this year, but I doubt I'll reup for the vinyl. Your mileage may vary.

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SPIDER CREW – *Sounds of Hatred* LP (Crowd Control / Spook / Straight From The Heart / WTF): Throw that IRON LUNG record in the trash, cut yer wizard beard, and break out the basketball jerseys! Get ready for some dual vocal, crew'd up, capital-H, Hardcore! Maybe I'm wrong, but I get the feeling this style of thuggy streetpunk-influenced HC isn't burning up the air waves of America's liberal arts college radio stations. Too many nerds are tripping out on DMT and never heard nothing about DMS. Well, drop down and gimmie twenty, newjack! (Or at least thirteen, cuz that's what I can do depending on how many pounds of banana chips I've wolfed down that day.)

If you've never heard of SPIDER CREW but you're a fan of pick slides, the hardcore-talking voice, Roger Miret style vocals, brutal breakdowns, and...tattoo conventions? (I mean, probably), then SPIDER CREW is yer new favorite. Total "Bodybuilders Living Outside of Society's Shit" style. *"And now-ow?! It's time!? It's time! Time! To! Prove!"* Mosh!! Sick.

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SS/BLOCK – demo (SFR Hardcore): More of the good stuff from SFR! What we got here are four tracks of wall of dis-boots UK82 pogo / noize from Mentakab, in Malaysia. Over before you know it. Super tight recording. Fans of EEL, PMS84, CINDERBLOCK will want. There's a serious *Wild in the Streets* youth takeover vibe to this that puts it over the top for me. Get yer copy: ssblock.bandcamp.com

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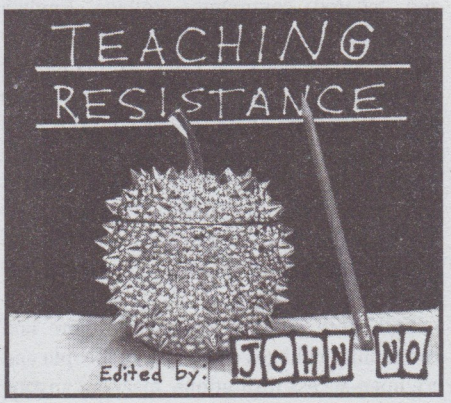
V/A – *Out of Order* EP (East End): Little four band Oi! / skinhead comp featuring NO FUCKIN GOOD from Calgary, the TRUTH from Melbourne, STRAIGHT LACED from Louisville, and FAVL from Vitebro. This is a nice little whistle wetter! I have NFG's 2012 CD, *From Sea to Sea*, and have gone back time and again wishing for more. Wish granted! They play a catchy and well-honed style that runs parallel to the LANCASTERS, TRUE GRIT (who they share members with) and early DKM. The TRUTH is a new band to me but I'm hooked! It's a mix of VICTORY and MARCHING ORDERS. Scrappy and menacing stuff. STRAIGHT LACED has always been a band that seems to show up on the radar every couple of years but never have put out a full length which is a shame cuz I'm never disappointed. It's solid American Oi! similar to HARD EVIDENCE or LEGION 76. Wrapping things up is the relatively prolific FAVL with the only non-English language track, "Fino All'Ultima Goccia," which first appeared on their album from 2011, *Cemento E Follia* but is re-recorded for this release. All other bands offer up previously unreleased songs, which makes *Out of Order* worth the dough. Another fine release from East End Records! Oi!

That's it for this month! We'll see yinz around next time! SFFS!

NOT NOTES:

1) If you wish to write me an email calling me a hypocrite I can be reached at: AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

2) If you like pictures of Oi! records, *Dungeons & Dragons*, or wonder what the daily life of a union painter looks like, follow me on Instagram: @TurboJorgensen



This month's Teaching Resistance is a primer on the importance of an institution that many of us have found essential in our lives, yet we often take for granted—community college. It is from the razor-sharp mind and keyboard of ***Michelle Cruz Gonzales****, a language arts professor at Las Positas College and punk scene veteran who drummed and wrote lyrics for legendary Bay Area bands such as SPITBOY, BITCH FIGHT, and INSTANT GIRL. Michelle's most recent book,* The Spitboy Rule *(PM Press, 2016), is essential reading.*

COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS TOTALLY PUNK ROCK

Community college is the punk rock of higher education. It's true. Both are filled with so-called social misfits who don't quite fit in anywhere else, people with ideas, creativity, and energy, all in need of direction. Community college is like your first punk band: you didn't need to know how to play your instrument to start one. And like your first punk band, you don't need to be good at English or math or even have any student skills to go to community college because community colleges are open-access institutions.

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What does that mean? It turns out that not quite understanding what it means to be open-access, or the true mission of community college, has a lot to do with American elitism, classism, and, I would even argue, anti-intellectualism. All are to blame for the rampant jokes, assumptions, and stereotypes that exist about the community college system.

"Community college: there are worser ways to disappoint your parents."

You can buy this on a t-shirt from Redbubble.

Students at the community college where I teach have been known to call Las Positas College "Las Po," short for lost potential, or the university behind Costco. Many believe that those who don't go straight to a four-year school have failed, that a community college is somehow inferior, of lower quality: cheaper, and therefore not a real education.

Being both a product of community college and tenured community college English instructor, I'm of course going to say none of this is true, but what I won't do is let you believe that community colleges are utopias either. Both community college and punk rock are, in fact, imperfect in many of the same ways. They are both institutions whose rules and culture have been created by the larger dominant culture in America in a way that can be alienating for people of color and / or other marginalized groups.

Still, both punk rock the subculture and community colleges attract young people and are open-access institutions, meaning anyone can join. It doesn't matter if you totally fucked up in high school or English is your second language or you spent time in prison or had parents who were drug addicts or you were an addict or you spent much of your childhood hospitalized or one of your parents was deported or you were born in Afghanistan and then fled to Iran and then Germany and now you're here in America or you're transgender or you were a teen parent or had a break down or used to be anorexic or you were born with no fingers on one hand or you're the first person in your family to go to college or even the first who graduated high school or you had an IEP and you're dyslexic. Community colleges will take anyone who wants an education, and if you're low-income, some of your fees might be waived, and if you need extra time on tests, you can get that too. In fact, as of January 1, 2018, in California, you can, as a first-time community college student, do your whole first year for free—if you don't count the cost of books. Perhaps one of the reasons elitist Americans believe that community college is inferior is the very fact that community colleges allow anyone to enroll, resulting in a student body that looks very different from a student body at a four-year college.

I went to community college straight out of high school. I had a vague idea that I'd like teaching, but I also wanted to be in a band. It didn't have to be a famous one, but the idea of being known for doing something creative, something groundbreaking, appealed to me. No one in high school ever really encouraged me to go to college. I got the feeling no one thought I was college material, and when I scored in the 0 percentile on PSAT in math, I felt my suspicions were confirmed. I don't even know what I scored in English, but it didn't matter. My mom was on welfare, a drug addict, and we couldn't afford higher education anyway, but I still wanted one. Nicole Lopez's (BITCH FIGHT bass player) mom reminded us about community college, and told us we could afford that. When we moved from Tuolumne to San Francisco, we enrolled in San Francisco Community College (everyone called it "Silly Knowledge"), but we dropped out during the first semester, not quite feeling grounded or capable of navigating the huge campus, or really having any idea of what classes we should take, or where it was all leading to. We also had shows to play and beer to drink.

Anyone can enroll, but not anyone, as I learned when I went back, can take "college level" classes straight away. Community colleges are two-year colleges, and the majority of the courses offered by CCs are general education courses that make up the freshman and sophomore year of any four-year institution. However, most students take more than two years to finish and transfer to a four-year, when that is their goal. There are a few reasons for this, and most have to do with the fact that community colleges have been under placing students (an overwhelming number of whom are poor and / or people of color) for years and years using standardized testing placement methods.[1]

- **Standardized Placement Testing:** Community college students can enter their coursework in two ways. They can choose to start at the lowest level math and English, or they can take a standardized placement test that places them into "the appropriate level." The problem here is that standardized tests are totally biased (culturally, economically), *and they don't* predict success in college-level math and English courses and should not be relied on as a sole measure of placement—using only one measure to place students in English and math is a violation of California's education code rules, but the majority of colleges have almost completely ignored this law until recently. See California bill AB705 for more on a more equitable development.[2]
- **Prerequisite Courses:** Another reason that it might take students longer than two years to finish at a two-year college is because Freshman composition is a prerequisite course for some general ed courses, so students must first complete and pass fresh comp before taking those classes. If students started one or more levels below freshman English, they will have to wait until they complete these classes and then freshman comp before being allowed to take courses in which reading and writing at a college level is required.
- **Remediation:** Many students (but not as many as we used to think) do need at least one semester of basic skills English or math before being ready for college level courses (and some need more than one). We used to call these "remedial" courses. Now we call them basic skills courses. When students are placed into these courses, whether using standardized testing or a variety of placement measure as required by law (something like overall high school GPA), these courses must first be completed before beginning college level courses, the courses that are transferable and will be applied to your bachelor's degree.

Community colleges are like punk rock in another way too. Just like people often say that punk isn't real music, many like to say that CCs aren't real colleges with real professors. People think that the level of education is inferior and that what you'd learn in a community college is a watered-down or simplified version of what you'd learn at a four-year school. While teachers can vary widely in degree of difficulty (true in any school), be assured that CC courses are required to align with courses at four-year institutions, and there are a variety of ways that individual colleges meet this mandate. But like punk, the radical thing about CC, aside from its open-access policy, is the fact that it, like punk, is a much less elite and less expensive education with instructors who know and expect as much (more in many cases) as a professor at a four-year institution. In fact, the primary focus of a community college instructor (it is not the standard to call ourselves professors) is to *teach*, not research, publish, or travel around the country, leaving the teaching and grading to teaching assistants. While it has happened, it's also much less common for community college instructors to sleep with or get busted for harassing their students. It might have something to do with the fact that CC instructors, whose main job is the practice of teaching, are more likely to see their students as actual people and not objects. Just in the past two years there have sexual harassment cases against professors at Columbia University's School of Arts, University of Texas, Central Washington University, Columbia College of

Chicago, UC Santa Cruz and Cal Berkeley, to name *just* a few.[3]

Because community college teachers are focused on teaching and see their students as people and not just a face in a crowd, many people who went to community college speak very highly of their experiences there (many who transfer from CCs to four-years also do better academically[4]). Susy Riot, vocalist for LAS SANGRONAS Y EL CABRON, had this to say about her community college experience: "CC tends to get a bad rep in higher education, but it's a space that fosters opportunities for many marginalized folks as a site of possibility for activism, creativity, pedagogy, and critical thinking and scholarship. I would not be where I am at today without CC and the teachers and peers I met throughout my experiences there."

Like Susy Riot, 1990s East Bay / Gilman punk, American Indian Studies Scholar, and History Professor Dr. Kate Bean found her way to her life's work through her community college education: "I left high school at fifteen and started at Laney and Vista (now Berkeley City). Eventually received AA from a community college in Minneapolis and transferred to University of Minnesota for bachelor's, followed by PhD. Now I work in public history and teach American Indian Studies / history at the community college where I received my AA."

Many like Shawna Kenney, journalist, DC punk, and author of *Live at the Safari Club*, who attend community college do so because they did not quite have the high school grades necessary for a four-year and because it was affordable: "I started at a community college, then night school at University of Maryland while working as a nanny before transferring to American University for my last two years while working as a dominatrix because my grades were not good enough from high school and I had no guidance or financial support from my family. I got an MFA ten years after that, then taught at several community colleges. I always told my students that's a great way to start—don't take out loans or waste your parents' money until you know what you want to do."

Portside singer and East Bay punk Pawsi Brittney said, "I started at Delta CC in Stockton and [went] on to a four-year college from there, University of the Pacific, where I graduated with a BA in Sociology. Wouldn't have been able to do it without CC! It helped give me time to figure out what I wanted to truly pursue without the high cost of a four-year."

And because community colleges are open-access and affordable they also are responsible for educating the majority of students of color in higher ed in the US. Yes, the majority of people of color who hold bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and PhDs transferred from a community college, Black and Latino students in particular.[5] Have you heard people call community college "ghetto"? This is why, but for many of us, these so-called "ghettos" provided access to knowledge, job skills, exploration, music theory classes, photography dark rooms, art studios, journalism courses, affordable general education, critical thinking skills, and self-actualization.

Sadly, though, getting a college degree and all the purported promises have become synonymous with the myth of the American Dream. Simply going to college doesn't guarantee you anything, and it's grown far too expensive for so many, but it remains a potent illustration of pulling oneself up by their bootstraps. (Of course, so is starting a successful business that doesn't pay workers a living wage, and getting rich off their sweat and labor.) Higher education has saddled many with extraordinary debt and not delivered on its promise. Remember this next time you or someone else talks shit about community college, which is affordable, and a bridge to so many things for so many people.

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3. chronicle.com/article/tracking-higher-ed-s-metoo/241757
4. insidehighered.com/news/2012/11/08/high-graduation-rates-community-college-transfers
5. pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0c28/5a2d2975115088bd9adf24ff8ce790aea178.pdf,
6. ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Community-College-FAQs.html

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers / educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com ***–John No, Teaching Resistance editor; alumni of Vista (Berkeley), Laney (Oakland), Diablo Valley (Concord), and San Francisco Community Colleges, a transfer student with a BA in Anthropolology from UC Berkeley***

Hey gang, I actually informed *Maximum* about a month ago that I was taking a bit of a hiatus from the column due to a bunch of shit in my life that wasn't really working. Wily bastards that they are, they promptly forgot to run my best of 2017 picks, forcing me to pick up the pen once again and come at you with a new column. I fully intend to pop up in the pages every few months when I've got a handful of truly remarkable new releases to write about, but it won't be quite as often as it used to be. Despite hope being a fool's game in these troubled times, I'm hoping that at the very least my personal issues will improve in 2018 and I'll be back on a more regular basis at some point in the future. What follows are my personal picks for the best of 2017, and a handful of new releases at the end that are more than worth your time in the new year as well.

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CHAOTIC END *(Χαοτικό Τέλος)* – *Promise (Υπόσχεση)* LP (Chaotic End): Out of seemingly nowhere, one of the finest Greek crust bands of the '90s returned with an uncannily true-to-form LP that could just as easily have been recorded in the '90s as the '10s. From the churning riffs to the bleak lyrics to the rumbling double-bass runs to the poetic but heart-rending lyrics, this isn't just good for what it is, it's as great as anything the band ever produced, almost 25 years removed from their debut album. Straight up: no punk band has reformed after decades apart and made a better record than CHAOTIC END did this year. I legitimately feel bad for you if you can't or don't get why this is one of the best records of the year and probably the decade.

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ILLYA – *In Adversity* EP (SPHC): ILLYA are, to be brutally honest, an uncool band. They're not hyped in their home country of Japan and they're certainly not hyped anywhere else in the world. That's a goddamn tragedy. Even among the surviving elder statesmen of the style, there are few bands that can match ILLYA's furious approach to traditional late '80s / early '90s Japanese hardcore. The band

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has persevered for over a decade through brutal band member turnover and lack of momentum, producing a stack of woefully under-appreciated recordings, especially the seminal *Destruction Impulse* cassette EP. My hope is that this, their first record in five years, might change the status quo, but to be frank, I doubt it will. Y'all can stay ignorant, those of us in the know will continue to savor the fact that we have the pleasure of supporting the most underrated band on the planet. There's an LP coming in 2018, don't fucking sleep on it.

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LEBENDEN TOTEN – *Mind Parasites* LP (Overthrow / self-released): LEBENDEN TOTEN have been one of the best bands in the world for over a decade, but 2017 is the year that they produced their masterpiece. It seems pointless to editorialize overmuch about this particular record as it is a certainty that it'll appear on almost every list appearing in this section (*MRR*, don't you fuckin' let me down!). *[We didn't —Ed.]* This record is transcendent, a perfect blend of DISORDER, CONFUSE, and HAWKWIND, with Chanel's vocals carrying the band with a confidence that they never have before, a revelation alongside the masterful songwriting that doesn't reinvent the band but does open it up to the full potential that has always been there. I never believed that LEBENDEN TOTEN could get significantly better, but this record (and the preceding *Static!* 12" on Iron Lung) proved me wrong. LEBENDEN TOTEN aren't just one of the best hardcore bands of the '00s, as of 2017 they're one of the best hardcore bands of all fucking time.

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BEER BELLY – *The Kids Just Want to Pogo Dance* EP (Nonsense): Three out of the four tracks on this EP are good, nearly great dumbass stripped-down street punk *à la* TOM & BOOT BOYS, DISCOCKS, and the whole St. Marks Place crew circa 1992, but "Pictures of Lily" cements it as one of the best EPs of the year. It's an absolute power pop gem, a catchy little tune that's sweet and heartbreaking all at once and is maybe the the most unexpectedly sincere piece of music I heard all year. Perfect length, perfect leads that'll get caught in your heads forever, perfectly obnoxious vocals and such great lyrics. Goddamnit I love this band, their stupid song about dead stray cats made me cry. Again.

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***Negative Insight* #3 zine / SHITLICKERS – GBG '82 EP (Negative Insight):** There aren't enough superlatives in the world for the third issue of *Negative Insight* and the light it sheds on the Gothenburg, Sweden hardcore scene of the early-to-mid '80s. It's a meticulous, impeccably researched document, essential to both the uninitiated and the hardcore lifelong fan. Not only is every feature fascinating, everything from the fonts to the layout to the print quality has been obsessed over to the nth degree—befitting for a fanzine that took over two years to compile. The cherry on top-slash-attraction in its own right is the repress of the SHITLICKERS *GBG 1982* EP produced from the original master pressing plates. It's one of a tiny handful of perfect hardcore records, and all praise goes to Erik for offering to the public the best pressing of this record since the original over 30 years ago. Fuck the bootlegs and the sketchy, semi-approved versions that have come out over the years, this is the definitive modern pressing of the EP and would be worth the money even if you bought the package and threw the mag away. Which would be the most foolish thing in the world to do.

***

CONTROL / EXITHIPPES – split EP (Paank Levyt): This record is a complete "fuck you" to every dead-eared moron who declaims about noize-punk all sounding the same, pairing as it does two of the best in the business at mining the past and chasing the future. Fukuoka's CONTROL are a secretive, self-contained band, content to emerge from their lair on occasion to lavish select audiences with their note-perfect CONFUSE-style noize. There isn't a band in the world that has studied the CONFUSE sound harder or implemented it more effectively that CONTROL, and this EP, even more so than their earlier split with STAGNATION, demonstrates that fact. That cracking snare, the beautiful panned drum fills, the nasty-but-clean bass tone, the sheets of guitar sound...It's all just fucking right. EXITHIPPIES are, of course, one of the most interesting bands in the world, as unpredictable as they are prolific. Sometimes they offer up a torrent of SORE THROAT-style blur, sometimes an electronic mess of distortion and roar with nary a guitar to be found. In this case they split the difference, joining a chopped-up and distorted house track to seething feedback, crust vocals and a last minute surge of instrumental noize chaos. This is noize-core for the noize-hardcore, creating a perfect pairing of old and new-school for the discerning connoisseur. Get hip or fuck off.

***

MORTAL WAR – *Gates of Hell* demo (Mortal War): These Philly crusters made thee demo of the year, looting the tombs of icons like ANTISECT, SACRILEGE, and AXEGRINDER and infusing their takings with a megaton warhead of youthful energy and aggression. No fucking lifted riffs to be found, just pure 2017-original stench-crust goodness, all wrapped up with the best goddamn AMEBIX cover I've heard in a dog's age. I am genuinely excited to see what this band can do in 2018, and you should be too.

***

DEFUSE – *Cry of Roar* EP (MCR): Japan's first all-female crasher crust band were never able to live up to their potential in the '90s, leaving behind a couple of phenomenal demo tapes and one split EP before the unfortunate departure of their drummer. The band remained in touch and occasionally performed with stand-in drummers over the years, but this EP represents their proper return as a band with a permanent drummer, and what a return it is! Like the CHAOTIC END LP above, this is the sound of a band that has been derailed by circumstance but has lost none of its style or fury. Two vicious, gut stabbing tracks and one grinding dirge with some of the most other-worldly shrieking vocals you'll ever hear. A brutal, brilliant return from one of the most underappreciated bands of the '90s Japanese crust scene.

***

OBEDIENCIA – *Erosion* LP (La Vida Es Un Mus): A year this shit needs a dark, melancholy album to provide its soundtrack, and I can't think of a better candidate for that role than this one. Opening with the all-time great track "Miedo," which debuted on *MRR*'s own *Sound the Alarms* compilation, *Erosion* continues in much the same vein. That vein is melodic, minor-key but anthemic punk, brushing up against hardcore at times but very much rooted in the the work of masters like X-RAY SPEX and ULTIMO RESORTE. Joana is as good a singer as any band could hope to have, dynamic and expressive and powerful in a way that could just as easily translate to the dramatic stage as the stage at the punk venue. The band back her up with ultimate confidence, leaning on a jangly nervous vibe that recalls the VICIOUS or SILLA ELECTRICA. While "Miedo" remains the best track the band has written (no shame, as it's one of the best ever), everything else here, from the short sharp shocks to the mid-tempo rockers, is fucking gold. Being a very late 2017 release, I can only assume that this LP will get the praise it's due in the coming year.

***

PEOPLE – *Perv Recreation* EP (King's World): The world's finest purveyors of SWANKYS-influenced sleaze punk finally cranked out a new record and goddamn if it isn't on King's World. The snake has swallowed its tail, the ouroboros is complete, yours truly dies happy. PEOPLE have always been learning and growing, their sound changing due to both consistent lineup changes and increasingly original songwriting. *Perv Recreation* is their biggest and most confident-sounding release yet, with an elaborate recording and

good use of multiple guitar tracks. Indeed, while the SWANKYS are still the most obvious touchpoint, this record nods just as heavily in the direction of the MERCURYS, the members of SWANKYS / CONFUSE / LYDIA CATS band that drew heavily from early blues-based rock'n'roll. Like ILLYA, PEOPLE are desperately under-appreciated. Unlike ILLYA, I do not invite you to become a fan of PEOPLE. If you don't know now, you never will. Leave us freaks alone to wallow in our filth; squares are definitely not welcome. I hope there's more PEOPLE to be had in 2018. I hope you don't find about about it until next year's best-of.

***

So, those were the ten records yours truly liked best last year. As usual, there's basically zero crossover between my list and anybody else's, so hopefully those of you who are on my wavelength might find something interesting you had yet to check out on it. Because the triumphant return of DEFUSE is on the list, let's start off the "new" stuff with a look at two collections of material from two more amazing all-female Japanese bands. Japankore, a label (and zine) out of the DROPDEAD camp that was active in the early '90s, was clearly dead and buried until a new release emerged in early January 2018. That release is *Stay Free*, the first vinyl collection of CRUSADE material following a discography CD of the same name released by a Japanese label (Take-death@68) in 2012. Collecting the band's two demo tapes (both released in 1992), *Stay Free* showcases CRUSADE's vicious take on the then-new crasher crust style, joining them with bands like GLOOM, COLLAPSE SOCIETY, and WAR CRY as very early adherents of the style. The monster vocals are the element that jump off the vinyl first, but the incredibly effective songwriting is what will bring you back to this record again and again. While hiss and feedback and distortion are all crucial elements of the style, crasher crust doesn't work unless there is an incredibly solid foundation of catchy songs underneath the noise. CRUSADE understood that better than almost all of their peers. Songs like "System Worker" or "No Trust" or (especially) "An Ostrich Policy" would work just as well with no effects pedals or noise at all, though the chaos definitely enhances their charms. This is an essential collection for fans of the style, as these two demos are just as good as what GLOOM were producing at the same moment in time.

MÄLIMPLIKI are an enigma. Featuring members of UNARM, this is a fucking amazing band that by choice have only made their recordings available in incredibly limited numbers and on some very odd formats, including a one-sided 10" split flexi. That's a goddamn shame, because these women are producing some of the most interesting hardcore in the world today. Their slightly less limited *Diskografio 2014-2017* (on the band's own Fanitomo Diskoj) makes all their remarkable material (plus one previously unreleased track) available in one place for a very reasonable price. The TOTALITÄR-rip cover gives a hint at what's to come as the band's songwriting is definitely influenced by the Swedish legends, especially in the structuring of the songs and vocal approach, though they are equally influenced by noisy bands (presumably including the likes of CRUSADE and DEFUSE). The sound is fucking huge for a three-piece, with killer dual vocals, primitive leads and propulsive Swedish-style d-beats driving it all. MÄLIMPLIKI also stand out from the punk crowd in two other notable ways. One is that they've joined a small handful of (mostly Japanese) bands in embracing the Esperanto language, though they kindly offer English-language translations in the packaging. The other is that they're great at subverting punk tropes in the way that they present themselves. They're not interested in presenting themselves as "tough" all the time; frequently their band photos show them as they are: three friends having a great fucking time together, with no negative filters or crust uniforms in sight. MÄLIMPLIKI are a very special band, and any punk would do themselves a service by tracking down their material.

Portland's FRANKY came bursting into 2018 with the new *Who Save The Fuckin Hero?* cassette. All the elements that make them great are in full display here, led by killer bass lines and the painful-sounding confrontational vocals, supported by (intentionally) dumbed-down 1-2 DISORDER drums and phaser-heavy, feedback-laden guitar squall. There aren't a lot of bands in this day and age that understand how to make this level of noize guitar work in the context of a full band, but with a master like Shit Zoo on board the shrieks and leads integrate themselves perfectly into the rest of the chaos. Three brilliant originals are capped off by a SEX PISTOLS cover ("Anarchy in the UK") that I'll probably reach for more often than I do the original in the future. Their take on the iconic solo is brilliant! Fuckin' love this band, you should too.

Finally, the TITS have released their first vinyl effort after a couple of ultra-limited demo tapes courtesy of Pogo 77. Being ex-RECONSIDERATION, I figured these fashionable fellows would continue in the same vein of poppy noisecore as their previous effort, but this is definitely not that! Instead, it's vicious hardcore with a heavy KURO circa *Who The Helpless* influence. From the nasty slurred vocals to the driving riffs and short-sharp-shock approach to songwriting this material does every justice to that legacy. KURO at their best were one of the very best bands ever to fly the punk banner, and this EP does a remarkable job of living up to that standard. All three songs are fucking bangers, and while the graphic design might be a bit off-putting (I much prefer the limited "band copies" cover to the generally available one) the material is incredibly strong and well worth overlooking the unusual design choices. This is sadly limited to 300 copies, so it might be hard to procure, but fans of that dark, gnarly strain of '80s Japanese hardcore best represented by KURO and to a lesser extent early NO CUT and CONFUSE would be crazy not to move heaven and earth to find a copy. My lord, the leads on this fucking thing are just fucking perfect! Early best of 2018 material for sure.

That's it for a while, please keep scouring all available platforms for new and interesting material. Punk isn't just what's right in front of you or what's getting hype on the English-language internet, there are so fucking many great bands that don't get covered in *MRR* or any attention in the West. Until whenever next time is, I've been Andrew, thanks for reading this crap for so many years.

Putting together year-end lists is always a struggle for me, and now that I've been doing this column for almost three years, I'm realizing that the most difficult part for me is actually what comes immediately after I'm done processing the recorded output of the previous twelve months into just a few condensed lists. It's 2018 now, but there are so many things from various points in 2017 that I'm still catching up with (and I probably will be for several more years), so even though I always think of my end-of-the-year lists as more of a starting point than as fixed, definitive documents, it can feel somewhat minimizing to be the person looking backwards while everyone is preoccupied with January's clean slates and new beginnings. But hey, time is a completely arbitrary construct anyway...

One of my delayed responses to 2017 goes

out to last spring's *Fatal Glitch* cassette from dystopian post-punks DRY ERASE, whose members are currently scattered between Oakland and Berlin. It could just be some sort of subconscious German association, but DRY ERASE's fractured, synth-damaged clatter kept conjuring digitally-altered futurist visions of genius early '80s SUICIDE disciples 39 CLOCKS in my mind. At the very least, there's a shared affinity for monotone vocals, pulsating drum machine, and sparse slashes of razor-edged guitar, if not the overt LOU REED fixation of the latter group. The claustrophobic "Headache" layers Rob I. Miller's dispassionate recitations with throbbing electronic textures like a 21st century short attention span successor to CABARET VOLTAIRE's "Nag Nag Nag," but overall, the vibe of *Fatal Glitch* is more sinisterly subdued—less harsh industrial strobe lighting, and more like the tracking on a malfunctioning VCR slowly flickering in and out of alignment. They'll have just finished their first US tour with some dates along the West Coast by the time you read this, and unfortunately time isn't an arbitrary construct when it comes to publication deadlines here at *MRR*, so hopefully you caught them if they passed through your geographic coordinates. (Vacant Stare, vacantstarerecords.bandcamp.com)

Three of the best shows that I played last year were with UK GOLD from Olympia, who put out a great self-released 7" around mid-2017 that's taken me a couple of months to truly pin down. Their take on tense, aggressively dry post-punk is almost disarmingly straightforward—Matt Murillo talk-shouts WIPERS-esque narratives of paranoia and alienation while simultaneously pounding his drums in simple but clockwork-precise rhythms, as Forrest Peaker's jagged guitar cuts in and out as the anxiety level rises. There's enough dissonant, coldly fixed-gaze moments in "Auto-Responder" and "Cracked" to add in a No Wave qualifier or two (specifically the punishing-yet-restrained minimalism of Glenn Branca's guitar abrasion in the STATIC and THEORETICAL GIRLS), while "Hunter / Hunted" begins with a shadowy drone and slowly unfolds into a hallucinatory tightrope walk between calm and noise that suggests sorely underrated first-wave New Zealand post-punks the GORDONS transported to the grey gloom of the Pacific Northwest. If those are reference points that mean anything at all to you, you should be all over this one. (ukgold.bandcamp.com)

Early '80s scrappy Southern art-punk weirdos the ZOOMERS have gotten the reissue treatment once again, following their warped (and impossibly rare) avant-jangle masterpiece "From the Planet Moon" 7" being brought back into circulation in 2016. The twelve songs on the new *Exist* LP originally appeared on a self-released tape that the band made in 1981 and were later collected on a CD-R by supreme archivist of late '70s / early '80s underground freak sounds Chuck Warner on his Hyped to Death label, but this marks the first time that they've ever been committed with permanence to vinyl. The most frantic and jittery tracks "Walking" and "Party" could have fit pretty effortlessly on a UK DIY comp circa 1979 alongside TRONICS and the HOMOSEXUALS, but the ZOOMERS were just as likely to slip into their own skewed junkshop interpretation of glam swagger (see "Please Stay" and the skronky sax-accented "Love Ya"), or the abstract, falling apart psychedelia of "All We Need," or a STOOGES-descended proto-punk snarl like "Let the Starving Egos Bleed." What if the MODERN LOVERS had grown up in Louisiana and spent their teenage years listening to third-generation degraded cassette dubs of the VELVET UNDERGROUND while dropping acid with Hippie Johnny under the bleachers of their high school? It still probably wouldn't be as gloriously fucked up as the ZOOMERS, but you might be in the same general orbit. (Mighty Mouth, zoomers.bandcamp.com)

Last year's debut 7" from Gothenburg's SKIFTANDE ENHETER was a total delight of economical DIY punk in the '78–'81 tradition of ultra-trebly guitar, crashing drums, and a shambolically crooked melodicism, so they've found a very fitting home for their latest single on the Market Square label run by fellow *Messthetics*-obsessive Paul "SUBURBAN HOMES" Messis. There's some warbling organ in the mix this time around that only reinforces the ramshackle "DESPERATE BICYCLES translated into Swedish" sensibility of their first record, but beyond that, there are absolutely no embellishments to SKIFTANDE ENHETER's spartan clamor—one song on each side of the record at under three minutes total; get in, get out, and get done with it. "Mördande Rutin" balances wiry, minimalist repetition with just a little agitated punk snot in a way that sounds like they were trying to recreate "Hologram" by the URINALS strictly from memory, and the jauntily keyboard-driven "Jag Har Fått Nog" is the some of the most freewheeling three-chord garage bashing that you'll find outside of any one of BILLY CHILDISH's hundreds of records. This is everything that a punk single should be in our modern age! (Market Square Records, skiftandeenheter.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.

It took me some long months to pen down how astonishingly good it was to see CUNTROACHES and LEBENDEN TOTEN perform on separate nights, in different months, in other towns, but both events shared that cosmic, natural, core attribute that is great in music, thus crafting a lineage of radical sound through time and space. Hello, the boy from the Balkán is back.

There is a new BARCELONA record that demonstrates how sound can radicalize the message of the band when the lyrical context gets lost without translation, but here, music is the pure channel of the meaning. At first, since I was not ready to digest progress, *Un Último Ultrasonido Nació Y Murió En Barcelona* was a bit disappointing—the bass sound is larger here than ever before, which emphasizes the band's great ability to pull together a cohesive sound and results in the listener feeling as if the band has complete control over what they play. In this controlled chaos, the actual riff is knitted together by six distorted strings, professing joyful liberation of the sound.

Aside from the merciless drum pounding performed in a style reminiscent of caveman purity, the chaotic virtue of the nonsense and no-riffs is my favorite part of BARCELONA's sound. The vocals have more space and volume, which brings some theater and makes every word serious without overacting. The coded message—to the non-speakers—gushes into your ears as if they were being cleaned with a barbed-wire bud, triggering political aggression that the imagination translates to each individual's specific environment within the greater world. Are we fortunate that the world is fucked up everywhere so this record can be universal? Or is it universal because the quality of the music could be enjoyed by ecstatic minds anywhere?

I bet there are a ton of messages that I overlooked. I might be using BARCELONA as an example to prove my recent idea that punk is a music genre after all and, while it is important how, why, who and what is being done within the subculture, sooner or later these variables should manifest in sonic form. You have heard BARCELONA screaming about nihilism and oppression—crafting sonic terror out of this tense environment. Although it is their anger and their record is the platform to do something with said anger, and even

in the case of the listeners experiencing similar feelings, Barcelona is a town where you can stuff your head with roasted padron peppers after midnight. That anger in their music is synthesized and you can consume it. Fortunately, due to its rawness, you don't have to be educated to appreciate it. But it is also due to that rawness and realness that this record, just as many other records, could be a topic of sonic aesthetics.

I was watching a documentary about my local scene and, while I was listening to art scholars and worn out scene participants try to figure out what past social aspects and life changing value lured them into blending with the subculture in question, I was surprised nobody noted that they like the music just because *l'art pour l'art*. According the them, the reason for the connection to punk could not be purely taste-based but also relies on interpretation—one cannot enjoy punk without the complementary frustrating social environment. We can probably agree but, in the longer-term, should the appreciation of the sonic content really be only possible with archived teen angst? KUOLEMA makes me happy when I am already happy because I like noise.

One of the biggest disillusions of punk is that the performers and the audience have to be the same. With regard to social structures and power dynamics they surely are, but a band has to solve their problems, vent their frustration, and espouse their ideology within the music, otherwise why bother? Those who hear it are not part of the solution that is the music. We enjoy it, many times we have to step out from our comfort zones, sometimes we smile while we listen to songs about nuclear holocaust, but that does not do anything, as it is a cheap moral reward of the modern age to think that when you learn about something horrific you also already started to solve it.

This might cleave the idea that punk is everything. While it is a music genre, its attributes are also radical politics, diy culture, and a "fuck you" attitude, all of which are fairly consistent among whatever has been gathered together in its vaults. However, its primary output is music, so initially all should be transferred into it.

As for a scene report, GYPSY SS recorded an LP that sounds mad without anything having been distorted. Still, they are able to build up a tense atmosphere in which the visual-heavy lyrics perfectly pair with adventurous guitars and both aspects are held together with bass. They lay somewhere between EAST BAY RAY's sound, but less reverb, and classic Hungarian punk (e.g. CPG) that was influenced by PEKINŠKA PATKA and SACCHARINE TRUST-ish weird hardcore/cult rock and roll, all with a singer who mixes aggro spoken word with primitive shouting, as if he was taking mushrooms while being very drunk on enlightenment. They are from Szombathely. In this isolated city, closer to Austria than to whatever is happening in Hungary, they are untiringly reinventing and forming punk to their own taste, an effort that makes their music, weird, fresh and unique. It could also mean that for foreign ears it is indigestible, but you do not have to worry: whatever their problem is, you do not have to solve it.

At the colder end of the fall we went to an opening contest of an illegal / DIY skateboard spot installed at a burnt out shooting range. The only neighbor was bribed with a large bottle of shitty wine so kids could go wild to their agitator-fueled noise. Local bands related to this dirty, wild, skate crew played, and it was a vertiginous variety of freak sounds. My favorite band of all was this new correlation of noise makers called ÉSZLELÉS. They play a bass-heavy, minimalist, mid-tempo beat, noise-barking hardcore—but not sham-rock, more LSD Oi!. Maybe it is just the boots on the singer, since here the only working class topic is hiding your punk identity from your co-workers because they would not understand why you spent a weekend afternoon on the outskirts of town at an abandoned ex-military spot to listen to cacophony and watch underage, drunk skate rats beat each other up. I was so envious of my friend who took mushrooms, but at least, due to a strange turn of the night, we ended up at a field where we were petting horses. This show reanimated my enthusiasm for the "no matter what, we will do it approach" of punk. The one that is busy with the notion of how I can do something rather than occupied with the why we cannot do something.

Back to spring, when CUNTROACHES from Berlin played an amazing show for a crowd that had no expectations but fell into a trance and jumped around to the pounding noise that was created by the several channels of feedback and Martina's barking. It was a brutal gig where everyone got what they wanted. The beat reached those who may have experienced this brand of punk for the first time. As we moved further into the set, it transformed into a more instinctive beat that can resonate with anyone who ever stared into fire and slapped her / his lap. These acts are coded into each of us, but still it is so unique when a band is able to reach that deep within the listeners. Thanks to the sound and songwriting method of CUNTROACHES, they are able to carry the listener wherever they want to take them; this is primarily due to the lack of familiar structures in their songs which can be used as handrails to keep us in our comfort zone. It is a rewarding experience to let them take you and hand over your trust to them, which forces a fast connection with them; they are truly a band you need to see live and for a whole set. It's worth noting that, after the first few songs, for me it was all just a brutal pounding, reminiscent of ancient beats; sometimes it almost felt like being trapped in a fucked up techno party where everything goes wrong—something akin to the opening scene of *Blade*.

Another brutal chain of experiences was to first watch the eigth episode of *Twin Peaks* season three before travelling, on foot, to Vienna to watch LEBENDEN TOTEN perform an ear-exploding set that was so dense that it, at one point, turned into a huge beat that bewitched even those who came without spikes and chains. Chanel performs as if she were trapped in an invisible power cage within which she still prefers to jump herself into exhaustion. The volume they played at and the noise they were using alienated me from the regular experience of watching a punk band perform and took me into another state of enjoying art. There are a lot of layers, as the noise is ear-piercing but the bass is groovy and dominating while the drums are tribal and you can also hear some sort of melody in the vocals. This is all especially evident in the song "Security," which can be found on the latest LP.

Even if I think "Static" is actually two songs and the transition between the two parts should have been done in a more organic way, that song in itself is pushing the limits of punk and touching on something with its noises that also connects me to season three, episode eight of Twin Peaks. Since it loops, it never ends—I suggest you listen to it for a few hours.

Attempts to dissect their music could result in the loss of the main component since it is hard to describe, but they seem to have general ideas and know how to stitch the fabric of them into reality. They succeed—this show presented the extremes that can be gone to in music while not letting it be too self-serving in an alienating way. But, because it was focused on the radicalism of the music it can demonstrate that such ideas can work in practice which at least for me is rather motivating than a generic song about the same interesting ideology.

Later on, before playing a show in Berlin, it was meaningful to see Martina from CUNTROACHES dance to a LEBENDEN TOTEN song, taking over the dance floor alone while at it, and to realize the imaginary connection between the two events in my head are real and you can actually dance-dance to LEBENDEN TOTEN.

In the epilogue I wish to praise this new band called POU who recently released a great LP on Metadona. They are a restrained, mid-tempo, powerhouse band with clearly demarcated main riffs and a lot of noise. Fortunately, this does not sound metal at all to me, it's more like listening to SSD on the wrong speed with more menacing vocals, echo and chaos.

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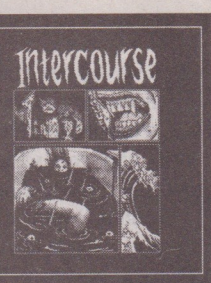

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RIP J.J. JACOBSON OF OFFENDERS

Fight No More:

As the crushing cold front overtook much of North America, including an unusual swath of the South, and just hours after I completed an interview with Pat Doyle of Offenders, he notified everybody via social media that Offenders singer J.J. Jacobson, who joined the band in 1981, died in the streets of Austin, causes unknown, so far. Jacobson and Doyle steered the band through the fiery albums *Endless Struggle* and *We Must Rebel* and a handful of tours across America when they would gig with bands like Condemned to Death and Crucifucks.

Now Doyle is the last remaining Offender. Not long ago, he and Jacobson teamed up for a reunion of sorts by tapping local talent like Craig Merritt (World Burns to Death) and Jeff Martin (Buzzcrusher), which highlighted the reissue of their albums by Southern Lord in 2014. The gigs also paid homage to their lost bandmates Mikey Donaldson (who played with MDC and Sister Double Happiness as well), who died in 2007, and Tony Johnson (Tony Offender), who died from cancer in 2012.

Offenders tunes remain a vivid reminder of the alchemy between punk, metal, and hardcore in the 1980s and evoke a countercultural sense of defiance, resolve, and aggression that can be easily paired with the new world: tunes like "Get Mad," "Youth Riot," and "Fight Back" are just a few that laid the groundwork for their ethos and appeared to act as precursors to some current social movements. "I met J.J. at a meeting with the Offenders for the cover of *Endless Struggle*," recalls Carlos Lowry, whose art became a permanent fixture on albums by the Dicks and MDC. "He was the only one at the meeting that noticed the hidden faces in the rock formations. Over the years, I heard all the stories about hard-living and legal problems, but he was always sweet to me, like that young kid I first met, but with a countenance that seemed much older than his years. As a performer, he was great, and to me he seemed to represent the world of hardcore that was coming, less the older rockers turned punks that most of my friends were, exciting and quite a bit less compromising."

Offenders were crucial and salient to Austin's veteran punk and hardcore community, which is still reeling from the recent loss of Chris Wing, singer for Jerryskids and Sharon Tate's Baby. Jacobson was a younger peer who joined Offenders three years into their lifespan, just as they saddled up with the Dicks and the Stains / MDC and shook up Austin with a roster of more militant tunes that tended to shunt new wave aside. "He came up to me once and threw his arm around me and hugged me out of nowhere...we were punk rock singers and brothers. He was a sweet kid back in the day," Dave Dictor of MDC recalls, and now "we are all dying off one by one."

Like many punks, Jacobson, who did a stint in prison, had his demons. To some degree, many punks have used music to cope and translate a sense of trauma. In doing so, they change from being hopeless, ill-fated, and powerless, to embodying a survivor's rebel yell. In some ways, music allows them to de-fang the pang, for moments at least. What was once fragmented, confusing, battering, and even dooming, can be grappled. What was once unspoken and made invisible careens to the surfaces of the songs, shared in a space of mind with audiences from trailer parks and manicured houses to rundown apartments and no-name tent cities. Even more so, Offenders took the pain and filtered it through an inventive musical vocabulary. They molded the templates.

"I saw a lot of hardcore bands in the early and mid-'80s, at least 50, probably significantly more than that," tells Jeff Smith of the Hickoids and Smart Dadse. Smith is a long-time fan of the "blistering... pioneering" unit. He also roadied a few times for the band, later played in a band with original singer Mick Buck, and even shared a drug dealer with Jacobson a decade and half back. "A lot of [the bands then] were flat out shitty, most were entirely unmemorable and musically derivative.

Photo by Geoff Cordner

Some were a little slicker but full of nauseating political poseur-isms. The Offenders were none of that. The music was top-notch, original and powerful. And J.J. was as real as it gets. His struggle was real. He was genuinely as hard as the music. He was born into a world of chaos and he didn't need to fantasize about hard times or downward mobility, he lived it." He continues, "Some singers are real and good. Some singers are good because they're real. That was JJ. Rest in chaos."

Those sentiments are shared by Doyle, who dealt with J.J. firsthand in Offenders. In the interview I pursued with him, he opened up about the singer: "J.J. was sixteen when he joined the band, and at least partially illiterate. The kid was a perpetual runaway / dropout and had already been in juvie numerous times by then. He had some epic abusive shit going on at home and responded just as you'd expect. So the lyrics came from a real place. His girlfriend and I helped him channel those feelings into workable lyrics. I think his first song was "Fight Back." After that, stuff like "We Must Rebel" and "Like Father Like Son" and "Wanted by Authority" just rolled off his notepad like there was nothing to it, like they'd been waiting in the wings for years. In retrospect, I think his lyrics still make an impact today because of their authenticity. Most punks came from the white suburbs and just pretended to be oppressed, but J.J. had street cred in spades, and it resonated with the kids. He didn't just scream about Reagan and the specter of nuclear war, his words came from the real experiences he carried around with him."

His death may not have surprised many people locally, but you don't have to agree with the way people live. You can mourn Jacobson's sizeable talent, his passion-lined voice, and his gumption and rage that got trammeled in lost time, personal trials, and the mess-heap of addiction. "We all realized J.J. walked his own path, resisting those who loved to help him," Tracey Torres of Black Salve notes, yet "Offenders was, and will always be, a legend to the Austin scene."

His voice will always be there: powerful, troubled, frantic, angry-as-hell, hopeful, super-emotive, and real as a bomb blast.

—David Ensminger

KARATE KLUB Ⓐ DUBLIN

A short history of a Dublin DIY punk space

By Eric (TwoHeadedDog)
Photos by Eddie Kenrick, Leigh Arthur, Shay Murphy, Michał Szampański and many more.

COLIN RIOT MEMORIAL MURAL BOHEMIANS FOOTBALL GROUND

The Karate Klub began its life during a cold winter in 2007 in Dublin when a group of punks got together and raised the cash to put down a rental deposit on a fairly run-down warehouse in one of the punk parts of town, Phibsboro.

The idea grew out of a smaller space that had been rented in a neighborhood further out of town where some of the same crew, tired of expensive commercial practice spaces, had started their own, in a tiny garage. This project was short-lived due to the slum lord activities of the owner, but the experience fired imaginations and motivated the move to a bigger space, involving more people with much bigger ambitions...After years of punk and anarchist squats being evicted, and even legal social spaces facing harassment from the city council and the cops, the small crew had decided it was time to create a space that would hopefully last and become a safe and fun hub for the Dublin punk community.

At a thousand square feet, the space is relatively big. It had had a previous life as a martial arts dojo, so the name came naturally enough. From day one the collective was adamant to try to avoid the hierarchies of the society outside the doors and worked to form a consensus driven decision making process, grounded in shared anarchist / anti-authoritarian principals.

The space just so happened to be right by Bohemians football club, a team that is traditionally leftist / Anti-Fascist and has many punks, skins, and herberts in its fan base. There had already been involvement with Boh's in the form of punk gigs in their bar, and since the inception of the Klub cross-collaboration has increased with regular shows, graffiti workshops, vegan barbeques, and other events like punk pub quizzes and even the odd festival. Bohemians has been really supportive of the space over the years and with the looming demolition and re-construction of their stadium, they have assured us that they will make sure the Karate Klub is respected and included in any plans that may impact us.

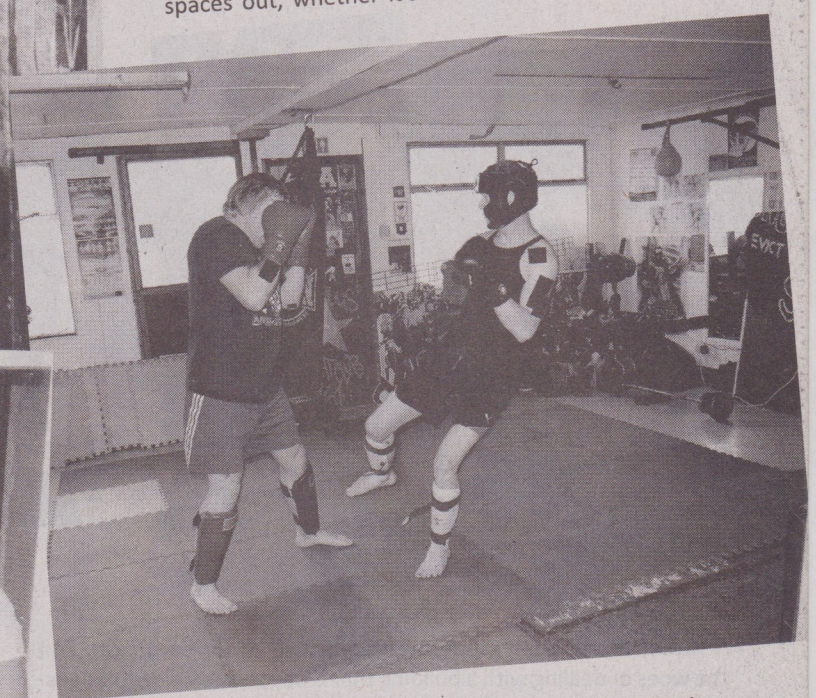
Once the leases were signed, work began immediately on the construction of a soundproofed room within a room, timber framed and insulated with rockwool, carpet and plasterboard, simple and fast. What followed over the months and years were hundreds of hours of work: installing plumbing, electrics, security doors, roof repairs, shelving, cabinets, endless maintenance, and so much more. The practice room began to fill with individuals, starting bands and making noise, and pretty soon we had to start a weekly session calendar to cope with the demand. The small, sweaty room also doubled as a recording space. It is not much to look at, or smell for that matter, but over the years countless demo tapes and records have been born in that dark little room. As His Hero is Gone said, "Like weeds we will grow." In that time the Klub also saw the creation of a DIY gym that gradually became the home of a weekly training session for fighters, as well as a venue for one-off martial arts workshops. At one point the space housed a screenprint workshop, with the toilet doubling as a dark room by switching the light bulb from clear to red whenever needed! We were lucky enough to inherit a big projection screen from another space, got some cash together for a projector, and since then have had countless film screenings, often part of an event, such as a *Mad Max* Party, where we were serving battered tofu out of "DinkiDi" dogfood tins(!), or the later *Fury Road* screening where we had hand-labelled "Guzzoline" homebrewed beer on sale. Other films and events have included a screening of the Russian movie *Sad But True*, screened after a day long fight workshop in the gym, followed by a

discussion and food. We've also shown the Japan punk classic *Burst City*, live coverage of Ireland getting annihilated in the Euro-Cup, Southern Horror-Animal revenge classic *Frogs* and dozens more. We also just featured a 30th anniversary screening of *Akira*, followed by a DJ night of nothing but Burning Spirits hardcore!

In the last few years a bar was built from scrap metal, namely the front of a 1940s Morris Minor (cars that were assembled here in Dublin) and a mountain of other scrap parts. This means we can host really nice events and even serve cold homebrew beer on tap! It's a good spot to plonk your arse on a welded up TCT-saw blade-turned barstool and hang out with mates, before or after a gig (it's also good for stage diving, when your favorite song comes on the turntable!). Bar Nights have also been used as a nice alternative to gigs for fund-raising events and there have already been many benefits funded by cheap cocktails, food and beer, including Refugee Solidarity Projects in Calais, Need Abortion Ireland, Squat defence funds, ABC and much more.

Speaking of gigs, the crew here organizes many. We've had various spaces over the years that we can put on a show including the infamous Tenterhooks, which was run by our good friends and is now sadly gone. Also Barricade Squat in the heart of the city center and Cafe Smash (Squat city), just down the road, were two inspiring spaces where punk gigs could happen and have also now been resigned to history. Right now touring bands can still expect great turnouts and a friendly atmosphere at Jigsaw (an autonomous DIY venue near the city centre), a chance to play in a stadium...kind of...at the Bohemians Bar, or a packed-to-the-rafters local pub in Phibsboro called the Hut. Most of these shows will end with an after party in the Karate Klub, and you may find yourself there for food before or after...(you should hope it's one of Andrzej & Marcins vegan feasts!)

I can't stress enough how important it's been to have a safe, secure space in this city over the years. All of us have been involved in projects that have been precarious. Whether it was totally illegal barricaded squats, or semi-legal rented social centers where the agreed purpose of the building was pushed to the limit, or the political affiliations and activities were enough for the authorities to shut them down regardless. Time and again the Karate Klub has been able to help these spaces out, whether it's been to just store equipment until the next place is opened, or to raise badly needed funds, it's somewhere people can rely upon and go for help when the going gets tough. Apart from this, even regular housing is a hard won commodity in Dublin and with a housing crisis that has left thousands homeless, we're lucky to have somewhere to store boxes of stuff or even lay a head for the night when the inevitable eviction notice comes through the door and you find yourself on the hunt for a new place to live.



Our neighborhood has been very supportive, especially Bohemians. Phibsboro is also home to many other spaces run by friends and likeminded people. Down the road is another DIY practice space, the Jam Jar. 'Round the corner is Bang Bang cafe, named after the infamous Dublin street-character who used to "shoot" passersby with a large key. It's a super friendly spot, with good coffee, vegan options and covered in anti-fascist paraphernalia and football memorabilia. There are also a good few squats and countless punk houses, some that have lasted over fifteen years or so.

One of the biggest challenges to the space has been the size of the collective (which has ranged between twenty and thirty individuals over the years) and how we go about the decision making process, making sure all members' ideas are respected. Monthly meetings were far more common in the beginning, but since the explosion of social media, coupled with members having less free time, we have been constantly drawn toward online discussion and decision-making.

This has had its benefits, especially for people who live in the further flung corners of the city, but on a whole it has meant that a core group of people have become the main activists within the space, while many are peripheral to its day to day workings. This is not to say that shit does not get done or that this has meant a slump in activity. However, the reality of trying to work collectively with more than, say, ten people, without regular general assemblies is almost impossible. What we have instead is smaller groups of people acting independently within the broader collective.

Other challenges include the constant need for hard cash, and the woes of dealing with a building that is beyond below regulations. These have generally been met head on with fundraising such as benefit gigs, merch such as t-shirts and badges, and benefit nights at our "Scrapheap" bar. The repairs to the building have been DIY in every way, including the literal jacking up of the roof with acrojacks, which is now a semi-permanent solution for something that could not be fixed without first tearing down sizeable amounts of the building. Security bars are being fitted in the coming weeks after a break-in attempt, but again, the existing walls and windows could have been constructed to a much more heavy duty spec, had the building been built for purpose. These are all the pitfalls of not owning a space and is something I would definitely consider if we did it all again. We have been in the space long enough now that we could theoretically own it if we had been paying it off rather than paying rent. In that case we could do our own building works and improve the space drastically. However at the time it began, we were basically kids, with no money and no way of obtaining a loan. There are DIY community schemes and even left-wing credit unions in some countries for such projects though and I'd definitely encourage any punks wanting to do something similar to check them out first. On the flip side, in countries where it is still possible to squat or create truly autonomous spaces there is a lot to be said for avoiding both renting and buying. To be able to secure and maintain a space in the truest sense can allow you to really do whatever you want. The possibilities just open up in front of your eyes. Many of us have experienced and helped to create autonomous spaces and squats here and abroad and there is a lot about these places that I really miss. However in a long term context we just could not foresee those options working here. Because of that choice a lot of compromises had to be made, even within our semi-legit status. There is a lot we can't even mention in this piece for concern over legal / political repercussions. However this is the route we chose, and the one that made the most sense at the time. So far it has served us well.

The Karate Klub has produced so many bands it's impossible to name them all. Something that stands out is the wide variety of styles and sub-genres that can exist under one roof. A lot of these bands have great releases online and on vinyl. Check out podcasts like This Show Rocks on radioactiveinternational.org , Dublin Punk Radio or Cosmetic Plague on dublindigitalradio.com for regular shows featuring Irish bands. Most of the bands on Distro-y Records can be listened to on their website distroyrecords.com too. My blog, stormhag.tumblr.com often features reviews and links to Irish Punk and hardcore and there are and there are many more including scatalogik.com and the incredible database of Irish punk and hardcore recordings: diyirishhardcorepunkarchive.blogspot.ie.

Here's an attempt at listing our current bands (it would be almost impossible to list all the bands that have shared the space since the beginning!): Sissy, Putrefaction, Dowth, R.A.Z.O.R, Disguise, Grit, Rats Blood, the Whole Sick, Badb, Cyborg A.D., Vena Kava, Surge, The Blow Ins, Żona Zła, Extravision, Strong Boys, the Objectorz, Grave Tide, Pożoga, Vivid Nightmare, Worst, Wizards of Firetop Mountain, Electric Bill & the Meter Readers, Love Scum, Realistic Train. I have to stress that these bands and the Karate Klub are just a small part of the overall DIY scene, and there are a lot more bands in the broader hardcore punk movement here in Dublin. While we are luckily not divided here, there are many sub-scenes that overlap but also have their own specific bands, venues and identities.

In 2017 we reached a decade of activity in the space and decided it was time to celebrate. Plans have been ambitious and

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RATS BLOOD

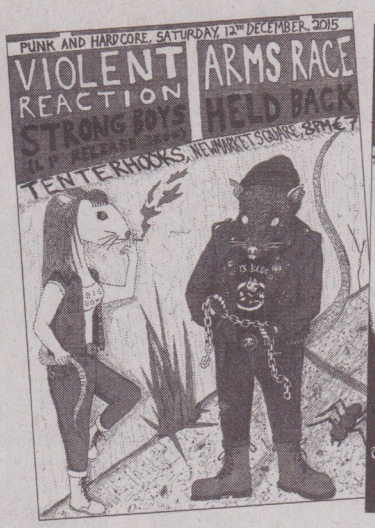
DISGUISE

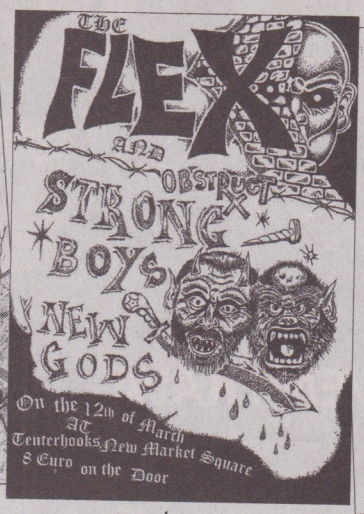
R.A.Z.O.R

GRIT

SURGE

SISSY





therefore slow in the making but we are strongly committed to releasing a 20-song LP compilation featuring many of the current bands that use the space and maybe a few classics from the Dublin Punk scene that graced the Klub at one stage or another. We're hoping to release this ourselves on our own label but we have already had offers of help from good friend Alex over at Distro-y Records here in Ireland, someone who has been instrumental in releasing so many bands that have come out of the space. We feel the compilation is really important for the city of Dublin. There have only been a handful of samplers from here over the years and maybe only one that was released on vinyl that I can think of. There is such a healthy DIY punk scene here, with so many bands that work like dogs and try to get their music across the oceans that surround us and so many dedicated punks that keep this scene motoring along. We're quite isolated geographically and that means we don't get as much traffic from touring bands, but the ones who make the effort are never disappointed. Plans are to hand screen-print a gatefold sleeve and include a large booklet with photos, lyrics, stories from the Klub and our scene in general. We want to create an artefact to celebrate this place, a thing we've carved out of this sometimes grey city.

The Karate Klub is just one part of the Dublin Punk scene, and like all buildings, the potential lies in the people that inhabit it. Right now we're doing well. Some years are better than others. Sometimes it seems always full of life and noise and fun. Other times it seems impossibly cold and dark, neglected and filled with trash. That's the nature of a Punk space...and maybe the nature of punk in general. It can be the most creative thing you've ever experienced, or a distracting and destructive burden. Either way it always seems worth putting in another day's effort to ignite that feeling which keeps us all involved. Having a space where you can be yourself is so important. It sounds obvious, but to have a place to go that is truly free of cops, bouncers and other negative elements is crucial. A place you can make noise into the night with your friends. A place you can bang out your frustrations on the punch bag, a place you can drown your sorrows and dance the night away or even a place to get some silence...sometimes! Like a lot of cities, Dublin can be unforgiving at times. We needed somewhere to call our own and that is what we have built. Punk spaces never last forever, that's why having friends who act like a family is so important, but for now the Karate Klub is home.

Check out the photographers' work, and more photos from the Dublin Punk scene here:
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ISS is a punk band from North Carolina. ISS includes members of several internationally-known punk bands like Brain F≠ and Whatever Brains as well as numerous other lower-profile projects that you may not know about but are very close to our North Carolinian hearts. One of the things that makes ISS unique is that they use sampling prominently, but as you'll see in this interview they don't want you to get too hung up on that fact or to view them as a gimmick. Which is smart, because their songs would be great no matter what instruments they used to record them. This interview was conducted with both members via email as 2017 decayed into 2018.

Interview and intro by Daniel from Sorry State Records. Photos provided by ISS.

MRR: Can you tell me a little about the two members' relationships? Hopefully this doesn't come off as insulting, but both of you are kind of odd ducks...How'd you meet, what was your rapport like and how did you decide to start this project together?

Edwin Jamal Schneider III: I think that Rich and I are friends? Actually, sometimes I wonder how good of friends we are, but then I realize that if you look at my electronic breadcrumb trail, I probably communicate with Rich the most out of all the people I know, and he seems to understand what I'm trying to do or say before I do. So, yeah we are friends. I feel really lucky that I don't have to explain my fail brain ideas in much detail in order for Rich to understand them.

But, from what I recall, the first time I met Rich proper was when I was in Brain F≠. We played a show with Double Negative and Whatever Brains. Anyways, I became a Whatever Brains super fan (this is around the time or a little before they released the *Rapper's Delight II* 7"). I don't really recall too much after that, but I know we exchanged a lot of emails while we were both supposed to be working at our 9–5s.

Whenever Brain Flannel was writing "Empty Set," I wrote a few demos using a technique I ripped off from a Whatever Brains song "Blues Lawyer." Basically, I would write over sampled rhythm tracks. Doing it this way, it would always keep things fresh because, inevitably you are bound to the tone, rhythm and mood of what you sampled. But it started to be the *de facto* way I'd write songs

Anyways, I had an album's worth of demos that were to become most of the first ISS full length. Originally, it was going to be a solo project (Why? I kinda can't even remember anymore, surely whatever the reason, it was probably really dumb.) But around the end of 2013 / early 2014 Whatever Brains were coming to a halt, and after a show in Charlotte, Rich mentioned that he would like to try his hands at doing lyrics and vocals on those demos. At the time I had sort of lost interest in it, and told him to go ahead. After writing a few new songs, and having one in person recording session where both of us were present we had a full length in the can in the spring of 2015.

Rich Imightbe: We are friends, Ed. Get over it. I once drew a picture of the E-man wearing a Royal Trux tank top palming a basketball

and holding his precious cell phone. I wonder if it is still around somewhere? That would make a good photo for this interview spread. And, yeah, anytime my wife sees me typing on my phone, she says, "Stop texting Eddie." We text a lot. Often it's about ISS, but I think we're usually just trying to keep the DHS busy. We're pretty good at piling bad ideas on top of bad ideas, and we should all be able to agree that ISS is the worst idea possible. Also, Sorry State Records employee J. Kurtz recently told me that Ed and I both avoid eye contact with others, so you can imagine the rapport of two odd ducks drunkenly gushing at opposing walls.

MRR: Was ISS hatched as a fully formed concept? In other words, did you set out to be a "band" that used drums sampled from punk records, or did it evolve organically? I remember reading about a band called Globsters (from Kentucky, I think) who had a similar approach.
Edward: The answer is a resounding no. Well actually the answer is more accurately, "sort of." I have no real idea what I was trying to do. I just know these things. First, the only instrument I could ever claim to be good at is a sampler. Second, now, and at the time of inception, I was far more into rap. I'm more influenced by how rap music is composed than I am with punk. Third, this is in *no way* an original idea. And fourth, I always hoped the music was good enough that the sample thing could be ignored if it had to be. It has not been, which is understandable, and I was naive to think that it would be.

Whatever my original intent was is sort of moot now, because we certainly have a particular, unsaid *modus operandi* at this point. And frankly, ISS would suck if it were just me. Rich has better ideas anyway.
Rich: There was a singer before me (Joe, currently of Narcoleptics and Extended Hell). Demos from that time period exist. But it wasn't much like what ISS turned into. I remember Ed playing me a batch of instrumental songs on his phone in Raleigh and losing my shit. I thought it was phenomenal. I wanted to be a part of it then, but I was too busy with other projects. I can't remember it actually happening, but I'm pretty sure ISS is the only band I've ever begged to join.

MRR: How did you go about putting together your first batch of songs? Did you have any failed experiments before the first tape was released?
Edward: I wish that the world could hear "My Pythons," a song that eventually became "Soft Youth."
Rich: The first two songs on the first ISS tapewere the first two we worked on together. They are also probably the best songs on that tape. It's been all downhill from there. *[laughter]* "My Pythons" may still happen one day, so I don't want to give too much info away.

MRR: What's the division of labor in ISS? Who does what?
Edward: I'd say the whole process is fairly egalitarian, *but* the actual breakdown is this. The instrumentals are about 3/4 done by me, and then I send them to Rich. He puts lyrics and vocals to them, and he also adds a lot of bells and whistles that really make a lot of the songs come together, or at the very least, not seem really fucking lazy. Really good examples of this are "Endless Drip" and "Part Time All The Time." "Endless Drip" contains a line of synths that come from a particular song (hint: Il Duce). The point is: I actually thought it was inspired by that particular song, only to find out many many months later that it was actually sampled from the aforementioned song. All the X-Ray Spex stuff that people either love or hate, that was all Rich. In fact, I remember hearing it for the first time and having my mind blown when it rifles through Boogie Down Productions, X-Ray Spex, and GISM in about 3 seconds.
Rich: That seems right. Ed does all the hard work, and I get all the glory. He's the cat flipping through records all day and spinning tasteful joints to select heads while I CD-J '80s night to indiscriminate buffoons. Ed's the heart, and I'm the rock-hard pecs on top.
Edward: Ironically, I pretty much exclusively own CDs now, and have very little vinyl at this point.

MRR: Did you think / have you thought much about who the audience for ISS is? On the one hand the lyrics (as well as the music!) are full of punk in-jokes, but on the other hand ISS seems somehow "bigger" than punk. Are you making music for anyone besides yourself?
Edward: I'd be a liar if I said I didn't think about who would like it. I will say, if I saw a description of ISS, I'd probably say, "that sounds like dog-shit." I'm aware of how gimmicky it probably all seems, and it probably gets credit for all the wrong things, but personally

speaking, I simply cannot make music in any other way. Regardless of how "clever," tongue in cheek, or snarky any of ISS is, I'd say it's probably the most earnest and honest way I am capable of making music. I waste *a lot* of time picking out samples, trying to combine things to loop correctly and in time, so if making "meta-punk" is the ultimate payoff, then the joke is truly on me.
Rich: The audience doesn't matter. All I want to do is put a smile on Eddie's sweet face. People should stop asking us to play shows, too. It ain't gonna happen unless you got like $10k and private jet.

MRR: With a few noticeable exceptions (like the Ice-T and David Foster Wallace samples on *Endless Pussyfooting*), I believe that all of the samples that ISS uses as source material come from punk rock. Is this correct? If so, is this pattern notable or important at all?
Edward: That is mostly correct. Rap is in there, it's just pretty hidden. Almost to the point where only Rich and I know it's in there. But I tried to do little tricks where I'd sprinkle in overused "classic breaks" like Bob James' "Take Me To The Mardi Gras." But, that was done partly to say, "Hey, I actually know what I'm doing," or at the very least, that I have a sense of history when it comes to how sample based music is made.

But I do wish there was more actual rap music in there. But that is a slippery slope, and if it doesn't serve the song, or if it feels forced, then it doesn't go in there. And let's be honest here, ISS is already so dangerously close to being a thing like the Bloodhound Gang or some other white guy trash, that I sometimes get embarrassed thinking about it.

(Note: While I like David Foster Wallace, he was mostly an easy way to make a Jast Last joke, as well as the the most pointlessly elaborate joke about suicide ever. Which in retrospect, I'm sort of horrified by. *However*, I encourage all to watch the last scene of *Stroszek*.)
Rich: Ice-T and David Foster Wallace were the only samples we personally cleared with the artists, so I'd prefer not to discuss the others in great detail. That said, samples come from many, many sources, but all the drums are punk or punkish. The only real pattern is 4/4. And, Ed, those were some really good suicide jokes. Don't stress it, pal.

MRR: You mentioned that you see the sampler as a musical instrument. Who are some artists who you think "play" the sampler really well?
Edward: The easiest way I can put it is this; when I think about ISS, in the deepest recesses of my mind palace, some things that come to mind, that I wish to emulate or conjure up are: Suicide (I think that's fairly obvious), DAF, Mantronix, Fripp & Eno, KMD, Showbiz & AG, Half Japanese, Basic Channel, or whatever musical duo out there that is *actually* good.
Rich: Not to sound like every other whitebread 30-something, but DOOM is king and can fuck up a boom-bap unlike anybody else.
Edward: I think DOOM used an SP-808 to make a lot of that early stuff? The point is: that machine is piece of shit, and I had one for a week before I got rid of it. There is definitely a video out there that Roland produced in the late '90s that is definitely worth checking out. You can get an idea of what that machine was made for.

MRR: I know you're reluctant to take any credit for the originality of the ISS concept, but I wonder if you think that punk is an idea that needs to move forward or not. Do you have any thoughts on the idea of "originality" as its understood through the prism of the punk scene?
Rich: I enjoy Civil War reenactments, but perhaps a bit of our

First known sighting of ISS

historical fiction won't hurt? Who cares.
Edward: So one record that both Rich and I liked was Eel's newest LP. Almost everything about that record sounds like it was made 30 years ago in Japan by like Gudon or Bitousha or something. But it fucking rules, and they nailed that aesthetic *so* well, and it's really hard to fuck with something done so convincingly. So in that sense, moving backwards totally works for me.

Another thing going on at the moment, which I like (at least on paper), is the idea that punks are starting to embrace classic or '70s rock, but sometimes it feels like an affectation that won't last. But, then again, what do I know?

Punk is a double edged sword. On one hand I really like when people nail genre specifics, but sometimes doing that, sometimes it's at the expense of substance?

MRR: What's the best drug to be under the influence of while you're listening to ISS and why?
Edward: Amphetamine. Because there's a song about it.
Rich: HGH. ISS is not a drug band. It's a gym band.

MRR: I assume that most of the work of putting together ISS songs happens remotely via the internet since the two of you live about 200 miles apart. Can you tell me about what technology you use to accomplish this? Do you think that the way that your relationship is mediated through technology has colored the project at all? If so, how?
Rich: Ed uses his phone and God knows what else. I used to use Audacity and cut / paste everything. It was hard. Now I use a very legal and not stolen copy of Logic that makes things a little easier. I even bought a microphone for recording vocals, but that won't show up until the 7" on Sorry State Records in 2018. Before that, I used a built-in computer mic. Sick tech specs, huh? This band could only exist through the internet. Each of us is too inept to collaborate in real time.
Edward: From 2015 to 2017, I didn't have a computer. *Endless Pussyfooting* (at least the music) was written almost entirely on my phone.

MRR: Can you tell me about the song "Endless Drip?" That's a song performed by both ISS and Rich's other band Bodykit. It's kind of weird to cover your own band, right?

Edward: You'd have to ask Rich more about that. For whatever reason, it seems that it is so stupid, that it just made sense. So I was fine with it.

But I will say that in September 2016, whenever Rich was in Charlotte recording the album and practicing for our only two shows, I arbitrarily mentioned the opening of *Once Upon A Time In The West*. I was commenting on how, when you're high, how engaging it is, in spite of nothing happening. Presumably, after droning on and on, Rich revealed to me that song was partly based on that. Surely, that has to be a metaphor for something.

Rich: Is it considered a cover if you're reusing old lyrics because you're too uninspired or lazy to string together another 50 words? But, yes, the lyrics were originally written for Bodykit, although they are mad goofy and much better suited for ISS. Ed is correct in that they were partly inspired by that boring, beautiful movie intro and that there is a sickening amount of bad metaphors in all of this nonsense. Time is a flat circle or whatever.

MRR: Y'all seem to be into having guest stars on the records... Is that another thing that comes from hip-hop culture? Can you tell me about some of those spots? Why did you choose the people you did, what kind of direction did you give them, etc? Also, let's everyone have a round of applause for the pseudonym "Ian Mmkay."

Edward: If anything, that is my least favorite trend in rap. The features, that was 100% Rich's idea as well. When he first started doing this, I wasn't crazy about it. It complicates an already complicated process. But, admittedly, he was absolutely correct, every single time.

Rich: Free labor is good labor when you're a shit musician and morally bankrupt.

MRR: Tell me about the *Studs* cassette. I know most of the tracks have appeared elsewhere (with the class "C.H.U.D. Freak Swap Meet" appearing on the upcoming 7" on Sorry State), but is this part of the official ISS canon? I notice that it's not listed on the ISS Bandcamp site.

Edward: *Studs*, to me, was a purely practical thing. When we played those shows in September 2016, we had nothing to sell at the shows, because the first full length was long out of print. But we were also rounding home on *Endless Pussyfooting*, so Rich enterprisingly came up with *Studs*. And expertly put it altogether. From what I can glean, it was supposed to be: a thing to sell at the shows; a place for things that were scrapped, but were still kind of interesting; a preview of *Endless Pussyfooting*.

Rich: The tape was a stopgap that took entirely too much effort. I still have calluses from assembling everything. And I've probably built some emotional calluses after reading *MRR*'s review of *Studs*, which said we sound like the Pennywise and accused us of being sexual miscreants.

MRR: I noticed that sometimes the samples you use have a kind of complex conceptual relationship to other aspects of the song. This occurred to me when I thought about how "Armchair Aryan (Richard Spencer's Gifts)" samples "Who Makes the Nazis" by the Fall, which makes sense as that song seems to be about alt-right trolls on the internet (at least as far as I can tell). I also notice that the two different version of "Puttin' on the Blitz" that I've heard sample two different Blitz songs for their respective rhythm tracks. I notice lots of clever little intricacies like that across the ISS catalog. Care to enlighten us into any others, or is that just for the true diehards / Dan-Browns-in-training to figure out for themselves?

Edward: Sometimes it's absolutely arbitrary. Sometimes it's on purpose. The easiest way to answer this is that, when I start working on a song, I'll start by sampling either a drum element or a melodic element from something. Sometimes that sample will get my fail brain going, and remind me of something else somewhat related, and sometimes the BPM will match up, and I'll use that. But often what I think happens, is I'll record something, and that will get Rich's fail brain going, and he will add something else that is related. Then, it snowballs from there. I don't think he pays attention to BPM as much as I do. Which, by the way, I envy that. Just because two songs match tempos, it doesn't automatically mean that it is a good match. A lot of times things actually work better when a song's respective rhythm is slightly off, and it's just better that way. Rich is way better at this than I am.

Rich: *Ehhh*. First and foremost, we have to keep ourselves entertained. What better way to do that than showboating unimpressive bits of useless knowledge we've gleaned through the years? We are grown men who wear buttons of bands we liked when we were 14 years old to work every day. And "Armchair Aryan" isn't about alt-right trolls, *per se*. It's about good-looking losers appropriating sketchy gear to get laid. I mean, fuck the alt-right, obviously, but also fuck the tone-deaf fashion idiots who have more Death In June t-shirts than brain cells.

MRR: What do you hope the ISS fan gets from this interview? What about the ISS novice? Anything else you want to say?

Edward: We've probably revealed far too much at this point. As for the novice, I'd say, "Listen, I know it sounds like absolute dog-shit on paper, and you're not wrong, but you're also not right either."

And the last thing I'd like to say is, whoever makes the "Proud B-Oi!" playlists on the Proud Boy website, please don't put ISS on there again (even if the Shitlickers and Negative Approach are on the same playlist).

Rich: Not to sound overtly preachy, but I just want to say that th—

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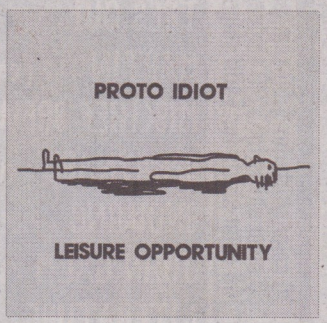

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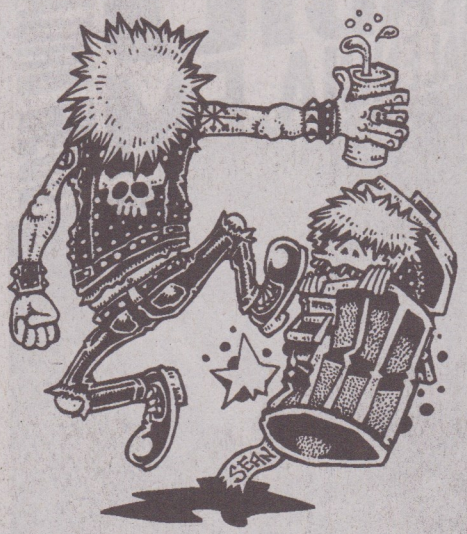

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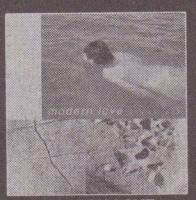

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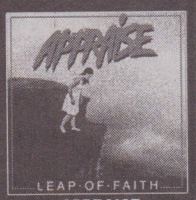

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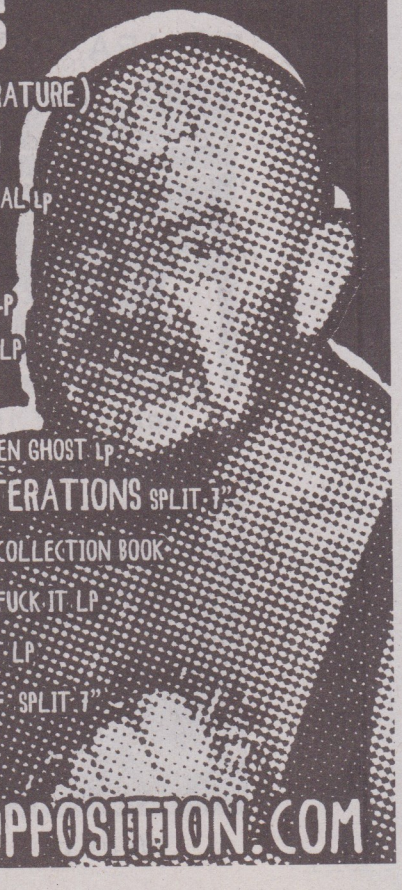

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MARTHA

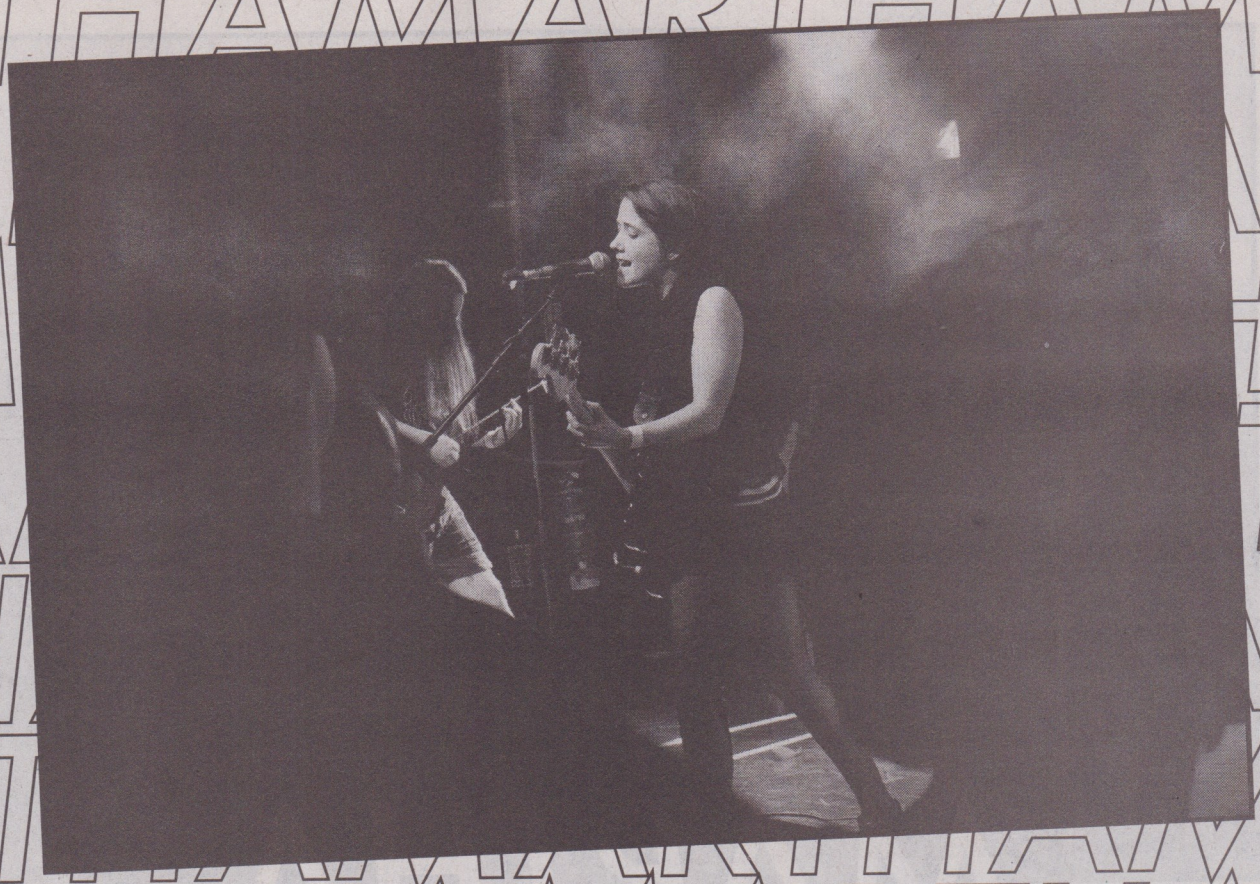
Martha are at a crossroads. Buzzing from the success of their second album, the rousing exploration of growing up that was 2016's Blisters in the Pit of My Heart, the pathway for their third album isn't opening itself up to them easily. At the time of the interview, the band were focused on finding the running theme that would turn the collection of songs they had written into a fully-formed Martha album. The band were also determined to not repeat themselves, calling on new influences and different approaches to songwriting.

Staunch Martha fans don't need to worry too much about their favorite band changing too much. The scrappy punk gang aren't going into their experimental jazz phase anytime soon. They still rep their local area, Durham, a town in the Northeast of England that's managed to more or less survive the neglect much of the North of England has experienced over the years due to their university, where siblings Naomi and Nathan work.

The band are also still as political as ever. As the roll call of abusive men in the public eye grows longer, it inevitably aimed its course for the music industry. Brand New's Jess Lacey was the subject of numerous sexual misconduct allegations prior to a UK tour on which Martha were booked as the supporting act. The band wasted no time and announced they were no longer going through with the shows, taking a stand for their beliefs.

Martha's jovial pop punk sensibilities haven't gone anywhere either. While they explore where the next stage of Martha will take them, the band explained that no matter how far out they venture, it will always end up sounding like Martha. We spoke to Nathan Stephens-Griffin (drums), JC Cairns (guitar), Daniel Ellis (guitar) and Naomi Griffin (bass) about what they've been up to, their thoughts on the future for UK political movements and what we should expect from Martha's third album.

Introduction and interview by Stephanie Phillips. Photos by Meg Lavender and Erik Melin.



MRR: What's the Durham music scene like? How is it different from other scenes?
Naomi Griffin: Durham's a small town, so that makes it unique. Being such a small town brings challenges but also opportunities in that it's small enough that it becomes accessible to do your own stuff through necessity, because if you don't there's nothing else happening. We organize shows here as a collective, which we call the Equestrian Collective. We have been active for a long time but became more formal about seven years ago. There's an art space run by friends of ours called Empty Shop, and they take over empty shops and turn them into art spaces.
Nathan Stephens-Griffin: Being in Durham has possibly worked to our advantage as really we should have never been on the map of where DIY bands go on tour. It should have been Newcastle or another big city, but we've kind of punched above our weight and managed to gouge out a space.

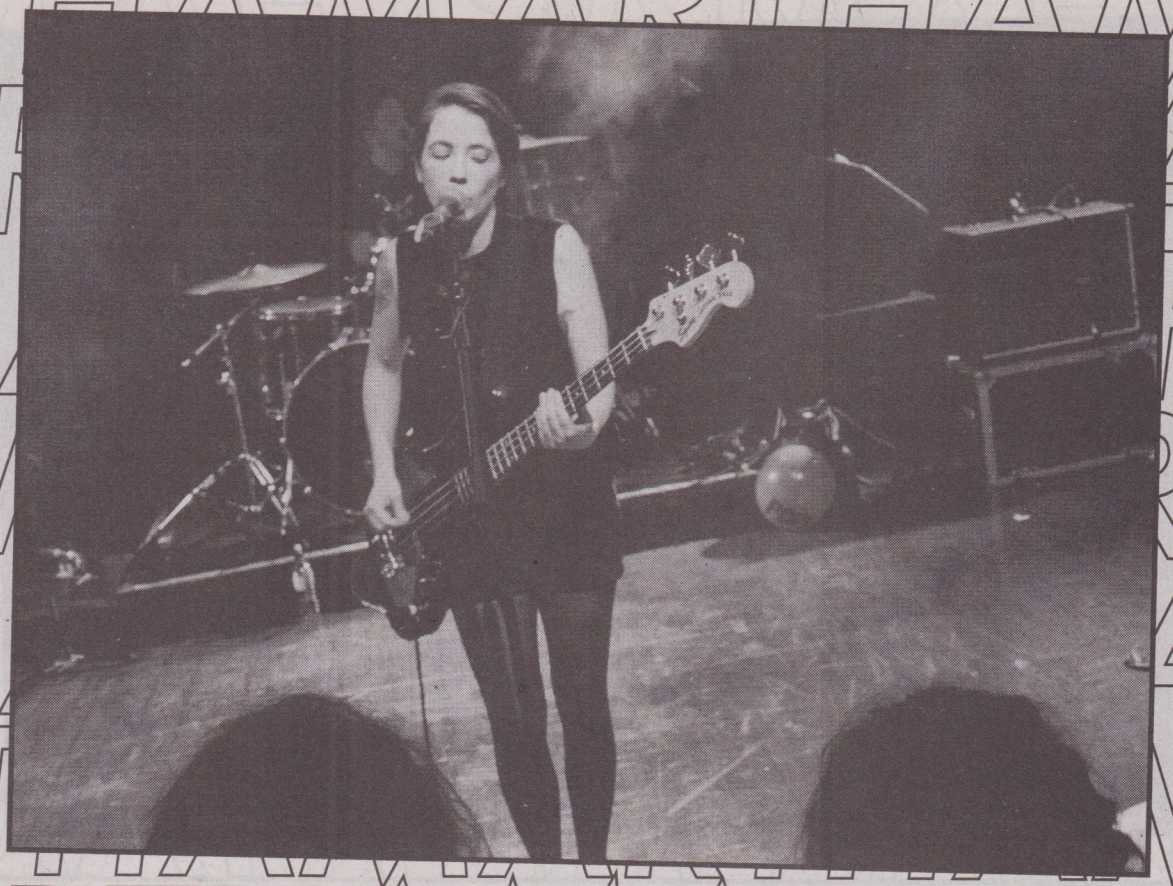
MRR: Do you think you'll always be based in Durham?
Daniel Ellis: I've no intention of moving away, as I do like what we have in Durham. Since being in a band, going on tour and seeing other cities, I know that what we do in Durham is really good.
JC Cairns: As long as we're a band doing what we do, we'll always stay in Durham because it's integral to Martha and the songs we write.
Naomi: I'll be here long after Martha.

MRR: Who are your favorite local punk bands?
Nathan: T-Shirt Weather.
Naomi: We've got Kinky and Pale Kids. Ghost Guilt, they're a new band we're excited about.
Nathan: Me and Daniel are waiting for JC to say ONSIND [Nathan and Daniel's political punk band]. *[laughter]*
Naomi: There's Outside Your House as well.

MRR: Your last album was in 2016. What have you been up to?
Daniel: We did a tour with Radiator Hospital at the beginning of this year and Joyce Manor recently. Besides from that we've been writing new songs for a new album.

MRR: What are your plans for the new album?
JC: Sean Price, who ran Fortuna Pop, the label we were on, got to 200 releases, he ran it for 21 years and decided this is a good time to end. That leaves us without a label. That's kind of exciting as now we're making this next record just for us. We haven't got the pressure of a label at the minute.
Daniel: We don't know who the record is gonna be with. We need to finish recording it first. We started work on it in January 2018, but who knows when it will be finished.

MRR: Has anything changed in your approach to your style?
Nathan: When we started we were explicitly like "let's try and do a Motown-influenced punk band." But whatever we do, it always ends up sounding like some of the bands we liked when we were teenagers, which is a lot of shitty pop punk and emo. Our tastes and influences have gotten much broader and we're drawing from a wider range, as you have to do if you're writing in a pop paradigm. The last record was a move towards power pop. This one, who knows? We have more of a sense of rock music in general.
Daniel: We're very consciously trying not to write the same record. If we wanted to, we could bash out another ten songs that are more like before.
Naomi: As well as making an album that is a complete piece of work that makes sense within itself, we also think "wouldn't it be fun to play a song like this or write a song like this," because we don't play



an album at a gig, we play a set of different stuff. That makes us a bit creative as well.

MRR: Have you been listening to anyone in particular to push yourselves forward?

Naomi: I've been listening to loads of country music recently. I don't know if that's gonna come through in our music. You'll have to listen to the basslines.

Daniel: It's not gonna be like the Dixie Chicks. That being said, there will definitely be influences from that, especially like harmonies, riffs, and basslines.

Naomi: That's where the love of country comes through. Like Nathan says, we have all these different influences, and then it comes out again sounding like Martha. But it's hard for us to know when we're within it.

Daniel: I've been listening to a lot of Thin Lizzy and that type of older rock so that's been coming through in a lot of my writing.

MRR: Do you feel any pressure from your fanbase with the next stage of Martha?

Nathan: There's a discourse happening around mental illness and anxiousness that lyrically we've been part of for a while now. I want us to push that conversation on now and not just be the band that sings about being anxious all the time even though we're all still anxious. I want us to say something new and worthwhile with this new album that isn't being articulated elsewhere. That's the pressure I feel at the moment. The first album was about punks growing up; the second album was about grown ups who stayed punk; what is this album going to be about?

MRR: Do you mean you want to sing about overcoming anxiety or an entirely different topic?

Nathan: At this point I really appreciate that we should talk about mental illness, that's a really important thing to say. Once you've said that, you need to go further and say we should talk about the context of why people are in mental health crises, and look at structural things like austerity and the wider picture. I don't want to say "let's talk about this" over and over again, then when they want to talk about it they can't get an appointment with their general practitioner, the hospitals are struggling to cope with the pressure, which is the reality.

Naomi: The albums were themes that came out naturally, then we decided to focus, and we want the next album to have some sort of thread running through it so it's not just a collection of songs, even though we write together and write independently. We're very much in the writing stages. We just have questions not answers to ourselves.

Nathan: What I'm trying to say is I'm an anxious person, but I'm not just an anxious person. Part of songwriting is you go to those places in your head that are a bit more negative and I want to try and find the positive a bit more.

MRR: Martha sings about British culture that isn't London or middle-class-centric. Could you talk a bit more about this?

JC: I think it does just come out because we write from our own experiences. We have come up with characters and storylines in the past but it's us articulating our own experiences and the experiences of those around us. Where I grew up is very working class. It's one of these places that has been abandoned by successive governments, which is the case for a lot of the North. That's largely underrepresented not just in mainstream culture but punk culture as well.

Nathan: There's an extent, and it applies to Big Joanie [a Black feminist punk band], but there's an invisibility of a southern-centric

white middle class songwriting. It's invisible because it's assumed to be normal. If a band pops up like Big Joanie who are singing explicitly about Black experience or a band that sings about being from the Northeast it will get a light shone on it even though you write about what you know. If we were just from London or the Southeast that would never be questioned.

MRR: What's the one band or musician people say they can hear in Martha that you never understand?

Daniel: The Buzzcocks. I've never listened to the Buzzcocks and we always get that.

Naomi: It must just come from other influences who've been influenced by them. We get that quite a lot.

Nathan: For a long time we were resistant to the indie pop tag, with the exception of JC, as it was a completely alien scene to us. At the beginning people would say "oh, this great indie pop band" and we're like "no, we're a punk band." We're quite comfortable being an indie pop band now. Before we were like, "why don't the punks wanna listen to us, and why are all these people in cardigans listening to us?"

Daniel: Can you remember when we were in the States and we got described as Oasis meets the Ramones?

JC: We don't sound like Oasis or the Ramones.

MRR: A lot of bands are afraid to write pop songs. Why do you think you've never shied away from that?

JC: Our influences have been the Housemartins and the Beautiful South. What they did really well was work Marxism into these great pop songs. If you look at the South's catalog, they tackle all these social and cultural issues in these really great pop songs to the extent that they were topping the pop charts. It's really great radical music.

Daniel: They were a band I'd listen to when I was younger through my family. When I was older I thought, damn, these lyrics are amazing.

JC: There's some really vanguardist stuff in the Beautiful South songs to the extent where it's like singing about murdering the rich or whatever. How many mainstream pop songs sing about that? People are resistant to pop, but it speaks to so many people. Being deliberately against that can be exclusionary. If you're trying to get a message across, then say it in a language that is universal.

MRR: Obviously, you're a political band. Are you hopeful about the future of the UK or what we can achieve? Do you think music can play any part moving forward?

Daniel: Me and Nathan as ONSIND, we've just finished our newest record, called We Wilt, We Bloom, which came out this past November. In the past when we've written songs it's always been hopeful and there has been a sense that things are gonna get better, but since Martha's last album and ONSIND's last album things have gotten worse and it's becoming harder and harder to be hopeful.

Nathan: That's why capitalism is set up the way it is, to make you feel hopeless. Like there is no hope for positive change. The thing about anarchism is to demand the impossible and imagine your perfect world and work towards it. Do the things you need to do as an individual, as a community, to get towards that impossible future. We need to get rid of capitalism; we need a revolution.

MRR: Are Martha going to be the soundtrack to the revolution?

Nathan: You said it. Maybe the soundtrack to the party after the revolution.

Daniel: Or maybe somewhere on the mixtape.

JC: Track seven on the mixtape. Not the big opener, not the big closer, but somewhere.

marthadiy.bandcamp.com

SENYAWA

Not Some Third World Country Band

Introduction and interview by Stevphen Shukaitis.
Photos by Dawid Laskowski

If there's anything that characterizes experimental music ensemble Senyawa, it certainly is being hard to describe. Consisting of vocalist Rully Shabara and multi-instrumentalist Wukir Suryadi, they draw upon traditional Indonesian music, but in a way that does not seem like it's ready for National Geographic. Likewise they draw from the energy of punk, metal, and free jazz, but without clearly belonging to any of those genres. Over the past seven years they have toured the world extensively playing with a wide variety of musicians including Melt Banana, Damo Suzuki, and Keiji Haino. Their vocals, which range from gentle birdcalls to guttural death screams, are matched by a range of sounds emerging from idiosyncratic homemade instruments.

In December 2015 Senyawa was in Singapore to perform as part of the improv and noise music festival "Closer to the Edge," organized by Japan's Asian Meeting Festival and the Obsevatory, an indie band from Singapore who often embraces experimentation and noise in their music. Stevphen Shukaitis got a chance to ask them a few questions about their music.

MRR: If Senyawa is a compound, what kind of compound are you? Is it an evolving compound? I'm thinking about the change in style from your first album, *Acaraki*, to the most recent, *Brønshøj*.
A chemical, volatile. Maybe hydrogen-based.

MRR: Is the compound form changing as you play for more years?
Yes, because Senyawa have a standard set form, which we use for places that we've never played before or audiences that have never heard Senyawa. Our set is good for introducing who we really are and the hard but beautiful music we make. Structurally we introduce everything in that set. So in the newer albums like *Brønshøj* we assume that people who follow us already know our music well enough that we can do this kind of different thing live, which is more ambient and fully improvised.

MRR: Has your approach developed through different collaborations you've taken part in touring around the world?
Definitely. For example, in Copenhagen, we were familiar with their kind of eclectic style situation, but it still helped us to gain new inspiration for sound. In Japan we toured and recorded with Uchihashi Kazuhisa, the recording of which was released as *Mahanyawa*. Collaborating with different people is good for us. Yet when somebody asks, do you want to collaborate with us, we don't say yes instantly. We have to know what can these musicians bring to our music that is different.

MRR: That's one thing that really impresses me watching your live performances, the way you both seem to drive each other on to make new sounds to match each other. It reminds me of the way that free jazz saxophonist Ken Vandermark says he likes playing with a range of different players because they challenge him in different ways.

Yes, we would never find it otherwise—the specific sound that we only find because we collaborated with a person for example.

MRR: Is that something that motivates you in creating new instruments?

Yes. When Wukir is building an instrument he has a new destination in mind. It's like he's going to another city—and he need to get there somehow—that's the reason for creating a new instrument.

MRR: How do you get into making your own instruments using extended vocal techniques?
The techniques were just a gateway for Rully in order to find his true voice, eventually. He is in a constant pursuit of new sounds, by trying and failing and succeeding and exploring and more trying. But in the end it's not about techniques anymore, it's about becoming one with your body as a performer with a voice.

MRR: What inspiration do you draw from punk in Indonesia?
We did listen to metal especially as teenagers. We didn't listen to avant-garde stuff as teenagers, we listened to what was popular in Indonesia for teenagers. Sepultura, Slayer, Iron Maiden, etc... We listened to everything. We don't listen to those bands anymore but it's already a part of us. We'd be hypocritical if we said "We don't listen to it so we don't use that as my influence"— that's bullshit, it's already in us. When you make something, the music you listened to as a teenager will come out, even if you don't plan it, because you listened to it intensely.

MRR: Almost like your harmonic DNA ?
Yes, as well as the Indonesian part of us, all these traditional roots and sounds and melodies that we've been listening to as kids. So whenever we make melodies they will not be like British pop melodies because we didn't grow up exposed to that.

MRR: Can you talk a bit more about your connection with the punk scene? How does it feel to have apparently spawned a new genre of music, Shabara-core?
Shabara-core is just a name given to us by *VICE Indonesia*. It's just for fun. Anyway, Rully's first punk band was Zoo, even though they're not exactly traditional punk. Back then, the very few gigs where Zoo could play were punk or hardcore gigs, so we fit in with that crowd. When Senyawa started, it was no surprise to the scene that this kind of music is his version of punk or hardcore or metal or whatever. Senyawa never meant to belong to any scenes, but the punk or metal scene can attribute themselves as inspiration to our music.

MRR: How do you see the role of language in your music, given that a good part of the audience is not going to have any idea what the words mean?
That's fine, people not knowing. The words become another musical instrument, another element within the spectrum. Language is how it helps shape sound. It doesn't matter what language, it doesn't matter.what sound—but the language shapes the sound. That's the purpose. And of course if you want to dig deeper you can, because you can find out what the words mean, but you don't have to to listen and enjoy it as sound. We don't want the meaning to overtake the enjoyment of listening to the music.

MRR: How does all the constant touring affect you?
I don't really think it affects us, it just affects our ties to where we are. We're still being ourselves when we're touring. But I hope by doing more shows outside of Indonesia, which is starting to happen, our recognition within Indonesia will increase. It gives a good impact because when we play outside then people want to know "how come these two guys can get attention abroad?" And then people in Indonesia start to take our music more seriously.

MRR: How do you keep yourself from falling into a musical rut, just repeating yourself?
We don't even think about that, when we make our music we don't think "let's make something that sounds like this"...It's just following the development of ourselves. We don't think "let's make something different than five years ago." We just automatically adjust to our current situation as human beings, with the new references or new experiences. But we don't plan.

We can work from every idea—but all of them come from improvisation. We don't have time to rehearse or make new music. During sound checks we try out new ideas, and then try it in the concert. And if it's good we try to keep it and do it again at the next concert or make it a bit better. Or if it's not good we just drop it.

MRR: The way you prepare is much different than Zoo which was much more of a long term thought out project.
Yes, Zoo was very prepared in advance. Senyawa is more organic, more spontaneous.

MRR: What's next for Senyawa? Any plans for achieving instant worldwide fame?
No. That's the thing, because that kind of sudden exposure will backlash against us. We did a video for *Vice* and a people reacted negatively. People don't like it because they don't know anything about it, most of them don't have any sort of reference to this kind of music. And so it will only seem bad. Imagine if we suddenly go to a major label that everybody listens to it while they don't have a reference to this kind of music before. It will just come across as bad music because there's no shared reference points. We're still too young to go suddenly to that kind of level. We're not some Third World country band. The wiser decision for us is stick to our roots, slowly, then if we deserve fame we will get it in the future. Just imagine if we were to perform in front of people who listen to Coldplay *[laughter]*, this is shit for them. We don't want that so we'll just take it slowly and go from there.

Dear Diary Zine Fest arose out of a collective desire to see personal zines highlighted instead of being lost in a sea of expensive art zines, enamel pins, and the glossy aesthetics of other fests. The organizers of the fest all live in the East Bay and mourn the loss of the "Old Bay" meeting places as they watch the "New Bay" become a playground for techies and developers who are pushing out long-time residents and the "Old Bay" flavor that was once there. Dear Diary Zine Fest is a text-heavy fest full of feelings aimed to amplify marginalized voices and celebrate the healing and transformative power of telling people's stories through perzines. There's nothing fancy or over $10 here; this is a trash fest for trash people.

Interview by Otto Thongson. Photos provided by DDZF

MRR: Can you introduce yourselves and what zines you make?
Vanessa: I'm Vanessa and I make the zines *Asswipe* and *Vacation*.
Enola: I'm Enola and I've done a couple zines, but the one I do consistently is called *No Gods No Mattress*.
Holly: I'm Holly, I've made a bunch of zines over the years including a collaborative zine with Alex and our friends called *Jealouzine,* and the most recent zine I made was *Hold Tight*.
Alex: I'm Alex and I've made the *Jealouzine* with Holly, a couple issues of *The Patron Saint of Pit Stains* and a zine about missed connections.

MRR: What is Dear Diary Zine Fest and how did it come to be?
Holly: It's a personal zine fest with text-heavy zines. There's not a lot of art unless the art is personal. We wanted to make a fest where your zine didn't need to have an online presence to be considered because honestly...What the fuck is that about?
Enola: I am increasingly resentful of the changes in zine world where zines that I consider to be really important seem to have less of a place, including my own zine. When I was rejected from this zine fest that I've been going to since 2012 in the Bay Area I sent out a discouraged, ranty text to a couple of friends and I was like, "Do we need to start our own zine fest?" I wasn't serious, I was kind of being bitchy but then Vanessa was like, "I would totally do that with you," and then I told Holly and Holly told Alex and we got together and it's been incredible!

MRR: What can we expect to see at the fest?
Holly: Hella zines! Zinesters from across the continent!
Enola: Actual pizza from the dumpster.
Vanessa: Workshops, zines that will make you cry after reading two sentences and then you'll have to go to the bathroom and cry.
Alex: Bathrooms to cry in! Don't expect Joe Biel.

MRR: What are some of your favorite zine fests you've been to?
Vanessa: I really liked the first L.A. Zine Fest because that's where I got inspired to create *Asswipe*. EBABZ [East Bay Alternative Book and Zine fest] is a favorite and sometimes SF Zine Fest, which has gotten better over the years. Chicago Zine Fest was fun the first time I went.
Enola: I've been considering switching back over to SF Zine Fest as someone who didn't like it five years ago and hasn't been in awhile. EBABZ 2012 to 2014 or 2015 was my favorite, I also really liked the first NOCAZ, New Orleans Comic and Zine Fest.
Holly: I really liked Portland Zine Symposium when I went in 2013, there were a lot of perzines represented.
Alex: I'd say 2008 Portland Zine Symposium, it was the shit.
Enola: *Hell* yeah! Portland Zine Symposium was my first fest I think and I have always loved it, but I haven't been able to go in 3–4 years so I'm not sure how it is now.

MRR: Why plan a zine fest in 2018?
Holly: Two thousand eight *zine*????
All: *Ohhhhhhh!!!!*
Enola: The world is so bleak and we're trying to make it better.
Vanessa: People need to get off the internet and make zines instead.
Enola: It's like a blog, but on paper.
Holly: Zines are still relevant and you can just do it. There's no authority, which is so important. You don't have to try to fit some aesthetic or ask for permission from an editor to validate what you have to say.

MRR: How have zine fests changed over the years?
Vanessa: With the internet, a lot of people try to capitalize on zines and art and I definitely see that at zine fests. There are a lot of art zines, more than I'm used to seeing each year.
Enola: There are a lot of people there to make a profit. While I like coming away from the zine fest with a little bit of money, it's more about getting my stuff out there, sharing with people, and making connections than it is about the money.
Holly: I haven't been to that many zine fests, but the one thing that I notice is how many people are there now compared to before. That's not necessarily a bad thing, just something I've noticed.
Enola: I also felt bad about my resentment about zine fests and what they're becoming, but when I first started talking to people at shows about this zine fest that we're making, and they're not even people who go to zine fests regularly, someone said, "wow I'm really glad you're doing that, I don't like going to zine fests anymore. I saw this zine that was $20 and it was just some colored paper that someone layered in a certain way." It felt nice to hear things like that from people that I don't really see as especially connected to the zine community. I had a lot of interactions like that. It's a change that people are noticing.

MRR: As this is your first time organizing a zine fest, what are some surprises—challenging or pleasing—that you've encountered?
Holly: I was surprised by how much people cared. So many messages that we've received have echoed back the same things that we're talking about right now, so that has been really affirming and exciting for me, how people who have applied to table are so into it.
Vanessa: Organizing a fest is a lot of work, but it's been fun to get together with everyone and work collectively to make DDZF happen, so I'm really excited to see how it will turn out.
Enola: Our biggest challenge has been finding a venue and dealing with people and places. We finally got it figured out and I'm really happy about that. Finding spaces to use is hard thing in the Bay Area right now.
Vanessa: Shoutout to David at the Humanist Hall.

MRR: How did you all first get into zines?
Holly: I don't exactly remember the first time I found out what a zine was, but I started making zines and reading people's zines about 20 years ago. Probably somehow through the Chainsaw Records Message Board—run by Donna Dresch of the queercore band Team Dresch—where fans could connect. I met people online and we became penpals when I was twelve and they were really nice and encouraging to me about my basic-ass zines filled with my opinions about riot grrrl or whatever. Their zines were cut and paste, personal, and angry, with no computer generated stuff. Reading about queer teens in other places, surviving, being their weirdo selves made me feel way less isolated in the place where I grew up.
Enola: I don't have a story. I didn't know what they were until I was about 22, when I first started making mine.
Holly: Well do you remember the first zine you read?
Enola: Some stuff from the free section at the Long Haul [infoshop].
Vanessa: I grew up in the Bay Area and I would go to Comic Relief in Berkeley when it was still there and they had all the good stuff like *Cometbus* and *Tales of Blarg!*, so those two zines in particular were very inspiring to me, but I was never motivated to make one of my own until I moved to Los Angeles in 2012 and lived with my friend Marna. When she would go to work, I would read all of her zines and she had been making zines since she was in high school, so she definitely inspired me. Then she took me to L.A. Zine Fest and I've been making my zine ever since.
Alex: I grew up in the East Bay too and just spent a lot of time at Cody's bookstore. I would get into a fight with my mom and then go to Cody's and read the zines in their magazine section.
Holly: Where was that?
Alex: It was on Telegraph and now it's just a shitty bookstore with Smash Mouth CDs everywhere.

MRR: It seems like the Bay Area has changed since you all started making zines.
Enola: Earlier when I was driving here, I saw these 20-something white people jogging on Mandela Parkway and I was imagining their lives and I thought "Oh, maybe this is a nice place to live if you have a lot of money."
Vanessa: A lot of my favorite places have closed, like Caffe Med and the Butter Dungeon, I mean Nabolom. There were all these cool places that people would go to hang out and work on their zines and now there's all these weird techie cafes that no one wants to hang out at.
Holly: Yeah, Nabolom used to have a zine rack and shit and that's how Angela [of *Supertrooper* zine] met us because *Jealouzine* was on the Nabolom zine rack. We did a "24 hour zine thing" event there one year, where we kept the cafe open all night for people to work on making a zine in 24 hours.
Alex: I miss Nabolom and Caffe Med and running into people sprawled out there with all their zine pages and glue sticks for hours. I liked how you could actually get zines at both of those places.
Enola: Everything used to be a lot cuter. I remember I found a display thing by the dumpster down by the railroad tracks and thought "Oh, this one is better than the one they have at Nabolom, I'm gonna go bring them this," so that was their display rack for awhile and now I don't know, I don't think anything is cute anymore.
Holly: There used to be all these shows and benefits and you could do them anywhere and now there's just a few houses that throw shows, or art galleries where they're booked up three months in advance. Sometimes if it was your friends' house, even if they didn't have shows, you could ask them if you could have a show at their house just once and that was okay. There were more house shows, it's a lot more cutthroat in general now.
Vanessa: The Ghost Ship fire definitely changed things in Oakland and still affects everyone and probably will forever.
Enola: It's just harder and harder, and I don't want to go to most of the places that are left anymore.
Vanesa: They don't want us to have our shows there either.

MRR: Okay last question, what are some of your favorite perzines?
Enola: All of the ones that you folks make. I'm really exceptionally inspired by *Doris*, Cindy Crabb is one of the best people. I also really like *Mend My Dress*, I'm glad that Neely is coming. I like Ocean's zine, *High on Burning Photographs*.
Vanessa: I love *Dreams of Donuts* by Heather Wreckage, it's a comic perzine. *Supertrooper* by our friend Angela is one of my faves and *Rot* is cool too. And of course Enola's zine, *No Gods No Mattress*.
Alex: *Green Zine* is a good one.
Holly: I like all of the ones you guys said. Also *Skinned Heart* by Nyky Gomez, *Slander* by Mimi Thi Nguyen and *Blackout* by Tara Jay.
Enola: Maybe this is a good place to say this but I really like this zine called *What to Keep, What to Give Away* by this person named Khristina who was my penpal for a little while but then I lost their address and I don't know where they live or how to get a hold of them. They sent me a postcard a year ago that said that they hadn't heard from me in awhile but it didn't have their address!
Holly: So Khristina, if you're reading this, get in touch with Enola!

Dear Diary Zine Fest takes place on Feb. 25, 2018 at the Humanist Hall. 390 27th St Oakland, CA 94612. The event is sponsored by Water, the official drink of the personal zine fest. Contact them at deardiaryzinefest@gmail.com

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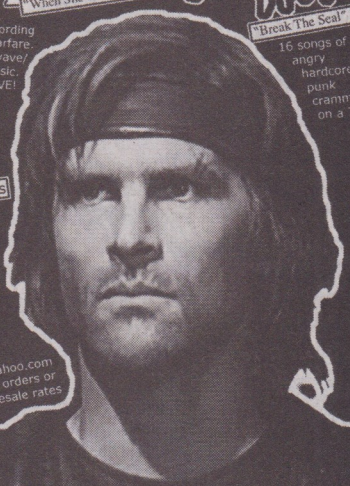

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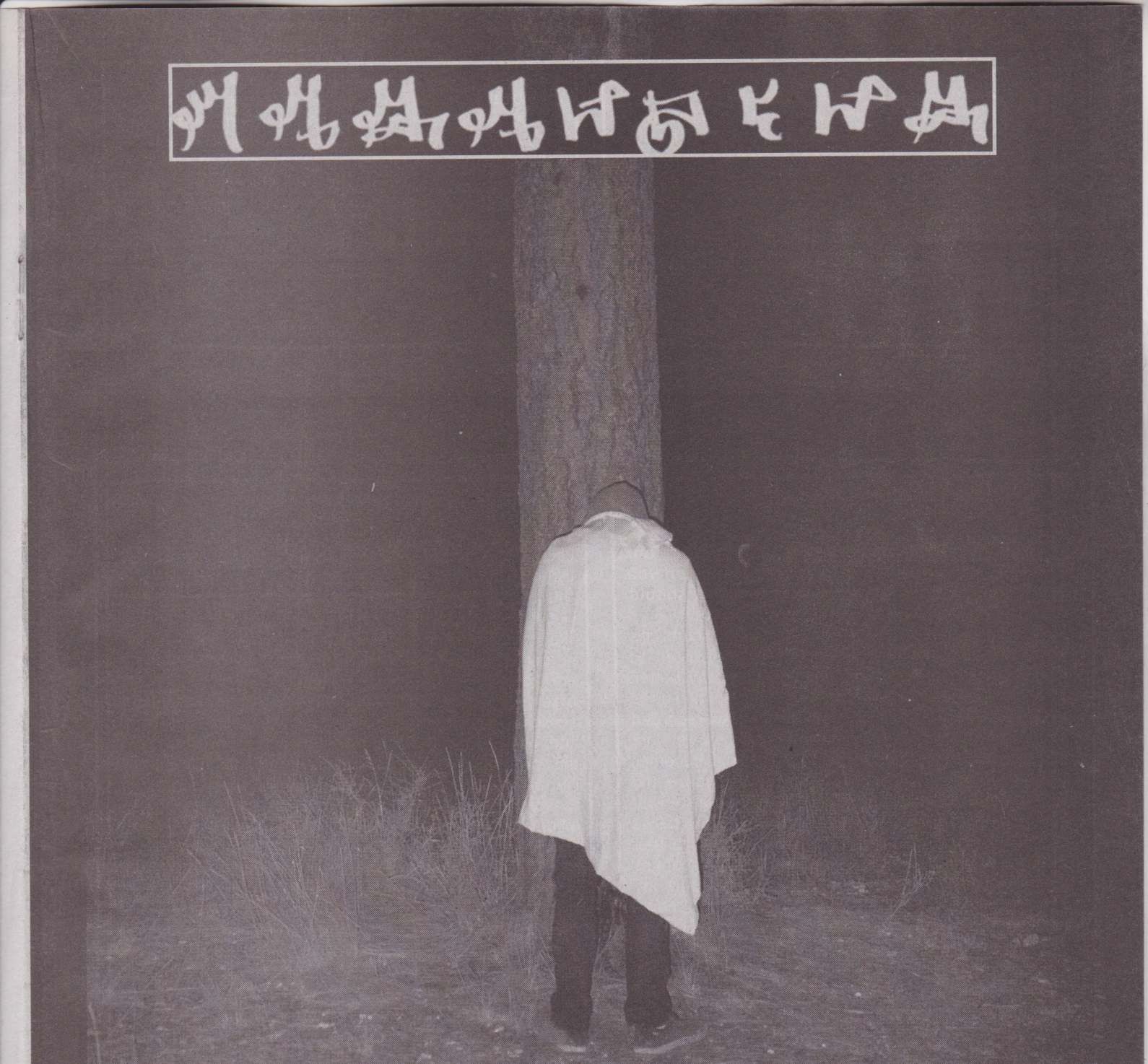


Maraudeur started as a self-recording / home-recording project for Lise Sutter in Geneva, Switzerland. The project began as a way for Lise to learn how to use the 4-track and how to play bass and the drums. Maraudeur can be best described as a band with powerful songs and a catching live presence that is totally punk, but also totally different from what you would probably expect.

Since 2014 there have been lineup shuffles, with nine different people playing in the group. Currently they a four-member, all-women band with two basses, drums, and a synth. They've had that lineup since January 2017 and released their LP Maraudeur *on bruit direct disques in October 2017.*

Introduction and interview by Joahnna. Photos provided by Lise Sutter.

MRR: Is the Maraudeur LP your first album?
Yes. I did two self-released tapes before and one 10" split with Purpur Spytt, who is also a member of Maraudeur. We also have one flexi 7", which is the only thing that was recorded in a studio. I like recording by myself better, because I don't feel a comfortable in a studio.

MRR: Why don't you feel comfortable there?
Because I don't have 100 percent input on everything. When I record I like to try different things. That is not possible in the studio sometimes due to time constraints.

I realized that while it's possible for me to feel comfortable in a studio someday, but I think it's better at first to have a precise relationship to recording, so you actually know what you are talking about and you know what you want things to sound like. To me, recording is more like an experimental thing. It doesn't really fit with the idea with more structured time in the studio. Also it's cool to be by yourself sometimes.

MRR: How long did it take you to finish the album?
About a year in total.

MRR: You talked about recording and to find out about what you want things to sound like. When you listen to the LP does it sound to you how it should sound? Like you want Maraudeur to sound?
I don't have a precise idea of how it should sound. It's more of an experimental experience. When I listen to it I think there's many things that could be way better, but to me it's more like it's kind of a group of songs, or little pastiches, that I tried out. The things I recorded are more ideas than actual songs. As soon as we work on performing it live, the Maraudeur material becomes more similar to actual songs because we change the structure or sometimes the music itself. That's also what I like—to have this filter in between the recording things and the live thing, because then it passes through four different people instead of just one. The music changes when its interpreted by other people, and I respect my bandmates as musicians and as idea makers so I enjoy their input. When we practice in the room I really don't feel like "This has to be like this and this." I really enjoy when people are adding parts, giving ideas for the structure or anything. So, I feel like it's kind of a horizontal way of working. Even though the songs are already made, they are open to change.

MRR: Is experimentation an important thing for your music in general?
Yes, because I think it just comes out of curiosity of how things work. Also, when I started, I didn't know anything about recording or using my cassette 4-track. I didn't know how to play bass and drums. It was just a funny way to learn all these things.

MRR: How do you manage to write songs?
What I usually do is I have a drumbeat or bassline. That's the first layer. Then everything comes on top of it. Sometimes everything might be a little sloppy, kind of naïve, or not very structured. When I start recording, the song is just a drumbeat, basically. It's not even like, I'm gonna try to make this drumbeat and then match it with this bassline. It's more like I write this drumbeat and then play on it. I record what I play on it. I often record a second bassline, then a synth line. It's layering things instinctively together. It's more a collage than a structured song. Like extracts of ideas. It's not like, you have already everything in your mind. Basically, I have nothing in my mind when I record it.

MRR: So, you work through association?
Yes. There is a song on the LP called "The Accident" and I just had the bassline in mind and it was in five time. So, it's not like: 1-2-3-4, but it's like 1-2-3-4-5—1-2-3-4-5. I thought: I don't know how to play a five time song on drums. I was listening to the first recordings by Tom Ellard—an Australian musician who played in Severed Heads. It's like electronic music. There is this song called "These Are The Words" where is a drumbeat that goes du-da-du-du-da—it's five times. I noticed it and I was like: "*Ahh*, I'm gonna play that on the drums." It worked out alright.

MRR: What about your lyrics?
When I am finished recording I try to work in lyrics that keep the flow, the rhythm, and the atmosphere when I listen to it. Like: "Oh, that word might sound good in this place!" When I have ideas of sentences or words I like, I write them down or keep them in mind. It's also like collaging things. Basically, it's things that I notice in my surroundings—a kind of a notation on what I am going through at the moment—then putting it all together. At first, I am more matching it together in a sense of rhythm and sound than the sense of words and lyrics. Later I figure out "Yeah, it's talking about this or that." I come to an understanding about what I'm talking about afterwards. Sometimes when you listen to songs you like, there are words spoken out—that's influencing the lyrics too. For example in the song "Rituals." What I say is: "*There's something clicking today / The same stressed steps today / Bucking against the walls today.*" It comes from a song by Wire that says "*I feel mysterious today / Everything is humming my way.*" It's the same rhythm, same sound. It doesn't mean the same, it's actually kind of the opposite, but I got inspired by the rhythm of the sentence.

MRR: What inspires you most for making music?
Going to shows and listening to records, but mostly having spare time in between events. I come from Geneva, Switzerland. I grew up in the country, so I took the train every day to go to school. You are moving, but in a passive way. I feel like the movement of your body creates the movement of your thoughts and your mind. But your mind isn't focused on something in particular because you're just waiting for the train to arrive. So, you let it go and that's where the ideas come from. Art covers, pictures, whatever—it's always popping up in a moment where I am actually doing nothing. That creates the first layer of material that I can use to start the process of creation. I am a lot inspired over boredom.

MRR: You also do the artwork for Maraudeur?
Yes.

MRR: What I kind of like about the cover is that it's special. By looking at different album covers you sometimes know what you are going to listen to. It's linked to some kind of music scene, style, whatever. When I look at yours I don't know what to expect. You have this doppelgänger circle painting, the credits on the side, a list of songs. Then this sticker with Maraudeur on it in weird letters that you can't read clearly at first. It seems secretive. Did you intend this when making the cover?
I don't know. The painting to me is maybe illustrating the process of listening through the record. Something slightly changed afterwards—at least for me. That's how I would describe the cover. I don't like it when there's too much information on a record. It doesn't look good. For me it's nicer to have a cover that's actually part of the body of the record. When it's crowded with information then it's not a work of art anymore. It's an informative piece of paper.

It also fits with the project in that it's not so important to recognize who exactly made the record. It's good to credit the people who worked on the record, but it doesn't have to be very precise. With the Maraudeur project I don't even feel like the writer of Maraudeur. I feel as though I'm processing information or my understanding of my surroundings, and I also process a lot of influences of the people I live around and that are inspiring me. Or bands or artists that are inspiring me. I don't feel like the owner of that band.

I feel like with music and art, we're surrounded by so many things that the idea of the author / creator is getting more and more obsolete. There are so many people in this record I could name. Even when I told you about the lyric thing or this drumbeat, that I stole. It's just a way of arranging things. So I don't feel like putting too much information about it. What's important to me is the result, or maybe the process. Putting things together. It's cool to think about some kind of magic, you know? More than thinking about an actual person.

Everybody is a creator today. We could also say that nobody is either. It's my goal to be able to process things and to limit the idea of creatorship.

MRR: What's your favorite song on the album?
Depends on the day.

MRR: Which one is it today?
Too hard. I think "Accident" is a good song live. It's better live than on the record I think, because it's punchy and it's fun to play punchy songs.

MRR: Are there often people coming to you after you play a show to talk to you?
Sometimes people come and say if they liked it. It's the five to ten minutes after the show that I have troubles coping with...You've been on stage which means people have seen you and recognized your face. I feel really uncomfortable with that.

MRR: Is that strange feeling connected to the thing you talked about before? That they see you as the actual person who makes the music?
No. I don't know why, it's just because I am shy or maybe, because the show is a really intense moment. It gives you a lot of energy. You showed a lot of emotions and you feel a little vulnerable. It is kind of paradoxical. It's cool, you are on stage so you can act the way you want to and shout and play hard. You can be super angry and express other kinds of emotions. You can actually say the words that you want to be said. It feels liberating. As soon as you're not on stage anymore you don't want to be that person or feel that way anymore. But it's worth the little trouble to be a little shy after the show, because it's fun to play shows.

MRR: What do you like most about touring?
Playing every night is cool. You practice the instrument every night so you get better. Also meeting new people that are interested in the same things like you, but from different places, so they have different lives and angles of view on topics. And drinking. *[laughter]*

MRR: How is it going between everybody of your band during a tour?
Touring is really intense. What I love the most is also what I hate the most. For example: Hanging out with friends for two weeks is awesome but at some point they are not your friends anymore. *[laughter]* The relationship you have with them when you're constantly together is a struggle, but also interesting, because it helps you to deal with you and your behavior towards other people too.

MRR: Maraudeur is an all-women band now. Was that a concrete goal of yours?
Yes, it was a goal I wanted to achieve, because as soon as there is one man in a band he's getting all the attention or all the credits for everything. We still tour with a guy on the drums sometimes. It's cool, because he's a friend, but then I feel like the idea is less strong. The live presentation is less radical maybe. Also, as soon as there's a guy in the band and you get to the venue, people are gonna ask *him* questions about how things should be set up on stage. It's a subconscious thing that men have this kind of power. The time when we just tour with girls in the band I feel so much more respect from the venues, the audience, the people working there. And people don't annoy us either. There's no drunk dude saying things like, "You play bass? Do you wanna hook up? 'Cause you're a girl on stage and so you're sexy!"

MRR: When you are the only girl playing in a band you experienced stuff like that, just because you're the girl in the band?
Yes. In Maraudeur we actually never get into troubles. In other bands it has sometimes happened with people like that—behaving in an uncool way towards women in the band, because they are women in a band. When you are four women on stage it's powerful. Then they don't wanna fuck with us, because we are impressive. We deliver a stronger attitude because we appear more like a group. I also play in other bands where it's mixed gender and I love it too, but it's different. I'm really not that kind of person that only wants to play with girls

because I hate men, because I think women are more powerful, or whatever. It's just a cool experience to be only women.

MRR: You said that you feel stronger with only women on stage. Do you think it's not just an important feeling for you to experience, but also something to show to people?
Yes, obviously. I think women are underrepresented in the punk scene, music scene, any kind of scene actually. It's also a responsibility to offer this kind of experience where you see women on stage. So, you diversify the experiences people can have. Again, it's not like women for women.

MRR: What does it mean to you to make music?
It's a fun way to take on experiencing life. It's a tool to understand what's going on around me or how I feel about things, how I think about things. I felt like it's the right way to express myself and, also, to take a different path of what I was supposed to do as a young kid growing up in Switzerland. I was maybe trying to get out of this by making music.

MRR: Can you be more specific? Making music to get out of this?
Switzerland is a really tiny, comfortable, stable bubble inside the big world. It's totally blind to what's going on outside of it. You are super-influenced when you grow up in a certain environment. It really builds the world for you. It was a struggle to start to be aware of the outside world, because it's so easy to live in Switzerland if you follow the university / good job / family path. Starting the Staches and playing outside of Switzerland with people living outside of Switzerland—it was really a big smash to my face.

MRR: You moved with the Staches to Leipzig, Germany not so long ago. Was broadening your worldview a reason for taking this step?
Yes. To get out of there. If you wanna have time to make music and art it's not possible in Switzerland. It's really expensive and super tiny. I feel like our possibilities expanded a hundred times since we arrived. Your environment is really important when you are trying to create something, and here there is a lot of space. What also struck me in the first place is that the urban environment is not really structured. It's wild. It gives the space to people to actually inhabit the city. It is a really important thing that people are aware of their surroundings, to take part in living in those places instead of only experiencing their own properties.

Our song "Property to Property" is exactly talking about how your environment is influencing the behavior of the population of a place. There's some places I have visited where people never interact with their environment. It creates this mindset where they can't care for their environment, because they don't interact with it. They don't understand it or it totally seems like people are just passing from places to places. Or from property to property. To actually never have a confrontation with their environment makes people easy to manipulate because they don't see what's around them.

MRR: So, it's a critical song?
An observation. Maybe a kind of negative observation.

MRR: Do you define your music as critical or political in any way?
It's not political. It's critical in a sense of observing. It's more like questions that I ask myself and I wanna talk about so I can understand what other people think.

MRR: Did it do something with your music to move to Leipzig?
It's really like living fully the experience without being entertained by anything else. It's cool to meet new people. Trying to learn a new language is also expanding your ways of comprehension. Basically, it's just curiosity. Everything comes from curiosity.

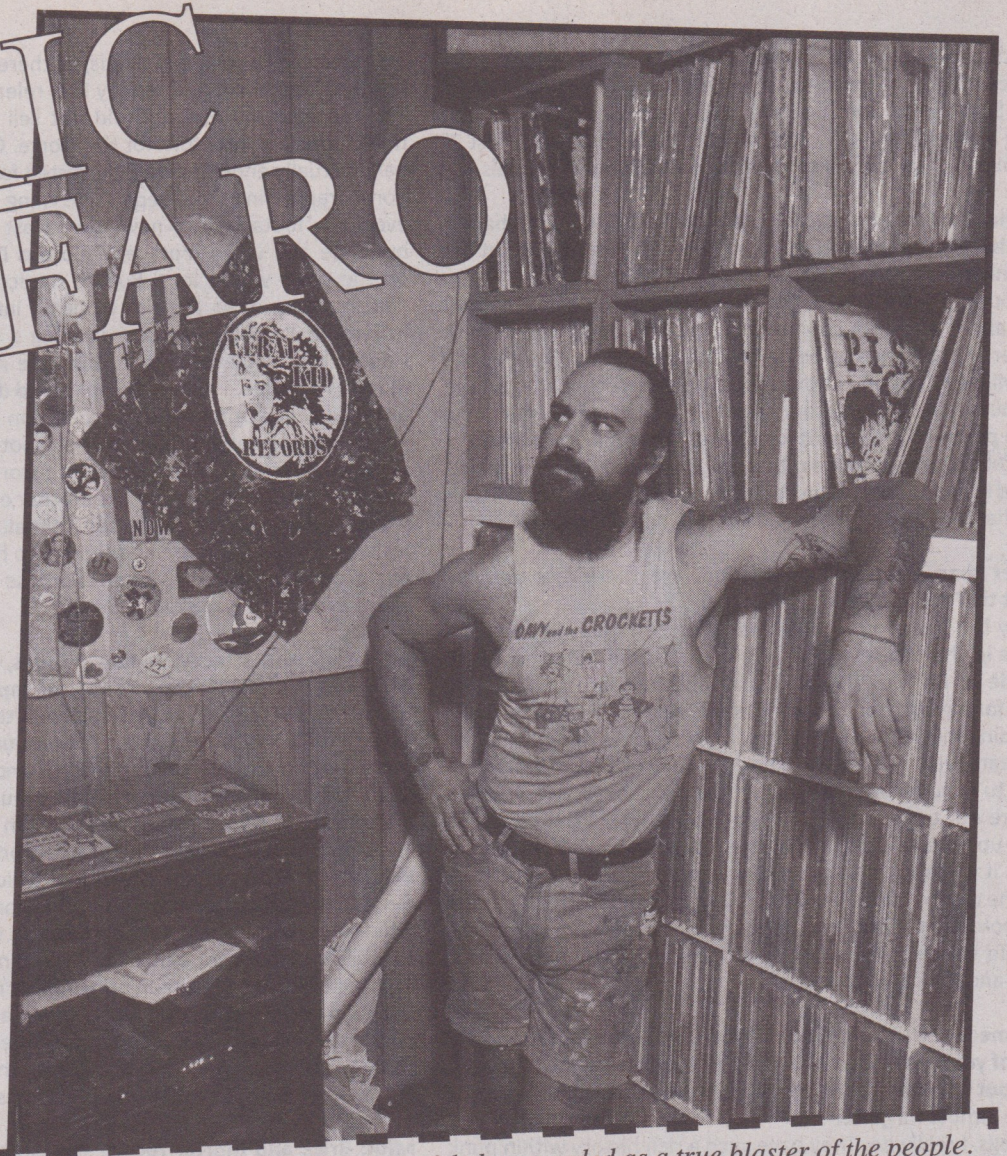
MRR: Yesterday was the first time I looked up the word maraudeur on the internet to get what it means. It's something like thief, right?
It's more of an antiquated word. I have this image of somebody stealing potatoes in the royal fields at night or something like this. It comes again from a stealing of mine. I was listening to *Midnight Marauders* by A Tribe Called Quest. I was in the process of finding a name for the project. I liked how it sounded. At the same time, I was really into the Mallard, a band from San Francisco. It starts with the same letters, so I thought, it was perfect. It comes well with the idea of strolling around and just using your in-between moments to think about things.

MRR: Is there something that changed for you about making music since you did your first record?
Just honing my skills in recording and playing instruments basically. I just started all of this because I wanted to play bass. It was a good exercise to make up riffs and to play them. And then practice them. I would never have the discipline to properly learn an instrument. Maybe I am too lazy. So, it was a good excuse for teaching myself how to play.

MRR: You tricked yourself?
Yes, I guess. What I love about music is that you can constantly improve your way of playing or recording, etc. I still have so many things to learn. It's a never-ending, never-boring thing to do.

maraudeur.bandcamp.com

ERIC BIFARO



Eric Bifaro, simply known to most as "Biff," can safely be regarded as a true blaster of the people. Biff is a punk of all trades. You may recognize him as a member of Radiation Risks, Brown Sugar, Plates, I Object, or countless other bands. Maybe he has driven your band on tour in one of his many, fueled by Uncle Rays chips, and stopping only to pour one out at Sheetz. There is even a good chance he has stayed awake for days on end screen-printing any individual or combination of shirts, stickers, record jackets, pillow cases, or even adult diapers for your band. For this interview we focus mostly on Biff and his ten plus years as a money burner with his Buffalo, NY-based Feral Kid Records. As of the end of September 2017, Feral Kid will be celebrating its 50th release with Radiation Risks Headless Horse-man *flexi disc.*

Interview and photos by Pat Shanahan

MRR: When and what was the starting point for Feral Kid Records?
The first release was in 2007. It was a 12" for the Buffalo / Rochester band Skate Korpse, who is still the best band to ever come out of this region. The band had released a few 7"s and had some extra unreleased songs. We put all of those tracks on a collection LP. One thousand copies were pressed and I managed to sell out of the entire press. This helped to continue the label—financially and motivationally. I also screen-printed all of the jackets for the Skate Korpse LP, which contributed to another major part of my life that has lasted the past decade.

MRR: Ten years later Feral Kid has just released its 50th recording.
Yes. It is a two-song flexi for a band I currently play in—Radiation Risks. It is called *Headless Horse-man*. At one point I wanted the 50th release to be a collection for Brown Sugar containing our singles and some unreleased stuff. However, a while back, my house was robbed and my computer with all the Brown Sugar material was stolen. So, that, along with some organizational difficulties has prevented a new Brown Sugar collection from happening just yet.

MRR: Which release sold the most copies / had the most pressed?
Both the Skate Korpse LP and Brown Sugar LP had 1,000 copies pressed, and both have sold out.

MRR: Brown Sugar has been the most prolific band on Feral Kid.
Brown Sugar did six releases on the label. All of which sold out

quickly. I still get positive feedback about the band, even though it has been years since we stopped playing regularly. One funny thing is that Brown Sugar wasn't even intended to be much of a band. Our plan was to play a few songs locally and that's it. We recorded our first 7" pretty last minute, just in order to go on tour with Rational Animals.

MRR: You have released music for many Western New York bands, and have always championed the area. How do you feel about the state of punk in Buffalo currently?
I worry about hurting feelings. The intention is never to alienate or talk down about anyone's creative efforts. That being said, I have started referring to bands as being "Buffalo good." So, like a band I would be willing to put on a show, or maybe even record and put out a tape by, but wouldn't necessarily want to put the time, effort, and money into putting out a record for. Currently I would say that there are a handful of bands in Buffalo that are more than "Buffalo good." These would include Facility Men, Alpha Hopper, and the Drains. That's not to say that there aren't other good bands in town though.

MRR: Other than geographical location, are there any unifying factors that tie Feral Kid Records together?
A person by the name of Mr. Ski-Mask recorded many of the Feral Kid releases in the first few years. He had a studio in his house on the east side of Buffalo. The man is an absolute lunatic. Ski-Mask was known for having a long-running public access TV show, and had been recording music for many years. I have always thought of him as a truly bizarre visionary. He worked especially well as a "producer," and helped to mold recordings. If you recorded at his house, you had to make sure not to flush the toilet paper, otherwise the plumbing could back up, and you might be standing in shit while recording your vocals. It was always an interesting experience, but some of the recordings he did for bands like Brown Sugar, Utah Jazz, Han and the Solos, Insubordinates, Bad Taste, among many others are absolutely incredible. To my dismay, he has since left behind the oasis that is Buffalo, NY, and relocated to Hawaii.

MRR: As someone who runs a record label, and appreciates unloved recordings of years past (Death Trap, Spike Penetrator, etc.), how do you feel about fan club / bootlegs of otherwise unavailable records from a time almost forgotten?
I love bootlegs. I really do. They have such a rich history within punk and hardcore music between your *Bloodstains* and your *Killed By Deaths* and I have discovered so many bands through unlicensed compilations like them.

MRR: How do you feel about boot chains?
I love 'em—are you kidding me? You gotta chain a boot. I keep a "corruption briefcase" with me at all times. So if any young budding punk rockers need any paraphernalia, I already have pre-cut lengths of chain for standard sized boot chains.

MRR: What is the proper length of dangle for an earring?
How long ya got?

MRR: Do you have any favorite accomplishments?
When I Object put out our LP, my friend Jared called me up and said, "Congratulations, you are officially the person that people's parents are scared that their kids will turn into."

MRR: There is a deleted number from the Feral Kid catalog. Can you talk about that?
Around 2007 there was a lull in quality bands in Buffalo and I wanted to do something to try to re-spark interest in such things. There was a longstanding hardcore band from the city called Corpus Dei and they had an unreleased recording that they had mentioned wanting to put out as a 10". As much as I am not the biggest fan of the format, I thought that by releasing this it could potentially show that there was a reason to still be in bands, as there was a local label willing to put forth the effort and money into releases for purely local bands. The record came out, and did not sell very well at all, and then things took a severe turn for the worse. One of the members of the band actually ended up being arrested for his involvement in a child pornography ring. This deplorable thing made national news and I even saw footage on a news broadcast where he was mentioned by name and video footage of Corpus Dei performing was played on the news where local Buffalo hardcore kids were recognizable dancing around. At the risk of being intertwined in such a thing, or potentially being accused of being a feral "kid toucher" myself, I decided it would be best to distance myself from the release as much as possible. I pulled all copies and deleted the catalog number from existence. After much deliberation I decided just to leave the number blank rather than subject another release to having the same number as it. What makes the story all the sadder is that the singer of the band, who was the brother of the member who went to jail, ended up horribly depressed after all of this came to light about his brother and got more and more into heavy drugs and eventually ended up killing himself with an overdose of such things. That person was a friend and is missed.

MRR:You also started More Power Tapes, with friend and bandmate, Nicky Reynolds. Why start a separate tape label? Nick and I started More Power Tapes as a way to attempt to get people excited about punk locally. We both started taking our home recordings a little more seriously and we offer to record bands for free and release their tapes. As a result we have both gotten much better with our tracking and mixing of recordings. When you run a cassette only label with your partner in crime and you do all the printing and tape duplication in house, the cost per unit is very low, which makes us able to put out a number of releases without exactly worrying about what will and what won't sell. As a result you develop working relationships with a number of different bands locally and nationally / internationally. Nicky and I have even begun bringing our mobile recording studio on the road with us when we go on tours, and there have been times where we will see a band and immediately approach them and ask them to record with us that night. Both the Accident and Big Bleach tapes we released came to fruition because of situations like that.

MRR: Brick and mortar record stores going out of business is an obvious fact of life at this point. Are there any punk shops left in the Buffalo area that carry Feral Kid / More Power releases?
Unfortunately, Buffalo's long running punk record store, Spiral Scratch, closed its doors in March of 2017. So, now there are no longer any independent punk related record stores in the Buffalo area at all. Oddly enough, the best record store in Buffalo for punk is an independently owned comic shop called Gutter Pop Comics whose owner is a punk and runs labels and has his distro in the store. As far as selling records in real life, you can usually catch me with a couple of boxes at most punk gigs.

MRR: Aside from putting out records, running a print shop, and putting on shows, you have also spent much time in the van. You have not only driven your own bands into the ground, but many other bands for many miles. You have seen many vans die. You've seen many great times, and many miserable nights. You've been trusting, yet left unpaid and penniless in a park in Tennessee by fellow punks. You've made lifelong friends in between. Why? Good? Bad? Keep going? Quit while you're behind?
The first international tour I went on was in 2006 with the band I Object that I played guitar in. I remember playing a show in Rome that we showed up to about five hours before the show. Since it was so early we asked our driver if they would take us into the city to see some of the sights since we had all that time to kill. We were met with the response of "I have already done my driving for the day, you can take a cab if you want to go." This didn't make any sense to

us as we were already renting a van. Almost out of spite we just refused to pay for other transportation. I decided then and there that if I was going to drive bands on tour that their enjoyment would be my top priority. I will express my concerns with things but never refuse to take a band where they want to go. Yeah, I have gone through a fair amount of vans, but if you think of the amount of miles I have driven, it isn't surprising. I have driven tours that began thousands of miles from my home in Buffalo, NY. Tours that started on the other ends of the country. That is a lot of wear and tear to put a van through just to be able to begin a trip. Somehow it still feels like the good outweighs the bad. The positive aspects of trips have always more than made up for the loss of money or sleep or sanity or whatever else. A few years ago I was playing in a Buffalo band called Mallwalkers. I had known the people in this band for years, but never in a touring capacity. On our first ever weekend tour, 45 minutes into the first drive to Cleveland, Dan of Mallwalkers told me that he had never seen me so happy. Just driving, listening to music, and shooting the shit. There is something about it that has never gotten old to me.

MRR: You bought a house on the fledgling East side of Buffalo, now dubbed Schleim City, a central and vital location for carrying on the long standing tradition of DIY basement shows in the city of light. Since then you have been robbed multiple times, relocated your print shop to Schleim City, and have helped put on many shows in this newly adopted punk sector. What's up?
Purchasing this house has been both the smartest and the stupidest thing that I have ever done. I was offered the house for a mere $10. That is not a typo, I bought my house for ten dollars. Mind you, this is a house in a very poor part of an already very economically depressed city. It was a completely gutted mess, electric and plumbing ripped out and scrapped, rooms filled with garbage, nothing appealing about this house at all except for the price. People often talk about everything being taken but the kitchen sink, well at my house that was taken as well. After the first few weeks of work on it, all Nicky and I had accomplished was using snow shovels to scoop up the 137 30-gallon trash bags filled with garbage out of the house. Over time it eventually has begun transforming into my home. The original idea of buying something in such condition was that I would have a cheap home base with projects to keep me busy for the rest of my life, but I would also have the ability to leave town for any amount of time on tours and not have to worry about rent anymore. Unfortunately, with being gone regularly and being on the not so great side of town, that did leave me open to home invasions. My home was broken into and burglarized twice. The first time was incredibly devastating and I lost a good amount of money as well as my laptop, which had many recordings I was in the midst of. What really bothers me is that I was smart enough to back it all up, and the external hard drive was stolen as well. Now that that is over, I have secured my house a lot more and made a repeat offense very difficult to happen. I ended up moving my screen printing shop in there as well after having issues with the person I shared a space with and decided to incorporate the same mindset with my work as with my personal living space. I will no longer have any overhead, can work less, and theoretically still make a similar amount of money which will go toward being on the road more and finding other projects to lose money on.

When it comes to booking shows out in Historic Schleim City, it has been very interesting. People in Buffalo are seemingly somewhat off put about gigs deep in the east side, and its location seems very far away for people, even though it is a mere 15 minute drive from the couple more popular parts of the city that people live in. Over the last year people seem to be getting more comfortable with it though and Nicky's basement venue Deep Space Eight is thriving. The shows there are getting better all the time. My house, Pallet Town, has hosted one show as well and plans on doing more in the future, and there is also a cool weird neighborhood bar at the end of my street called Laurel & Hardy's which has expressed interest in letting us book gigs there. This bar seems to be lost to time, as their drink prices are insanely cheap and they will let us use the back room for nothing, "just don't bring your own booze" is what we were told. You book a gig with us in Buffalo on a Friday and you better believe that more than half the gig is gonna stroll from Deep Space Eight up to Laurel & Hardy's for their kooky karaoke night.

MRR: I remember a conversation we once had, where you related your life to the movie *The Wrestler*.
[laughter] It is like looking in a mirror, sure. It is certainly a ridiculous comparison. It has been a couple of years, so it I might need to revisit the movie. I did feel like seeing all of the aspects of this one thing in life that are so bad for this person involved in it—preventing him from having a normal job, or a meaningful relationship, or relationships with his family members. This one thing that prevents him from doing that stuff is the one thing that he lives to do. It is the only time he feels like a sane human being. That seems pretty relatable to me.

feral-kid-records.bandcamp.com

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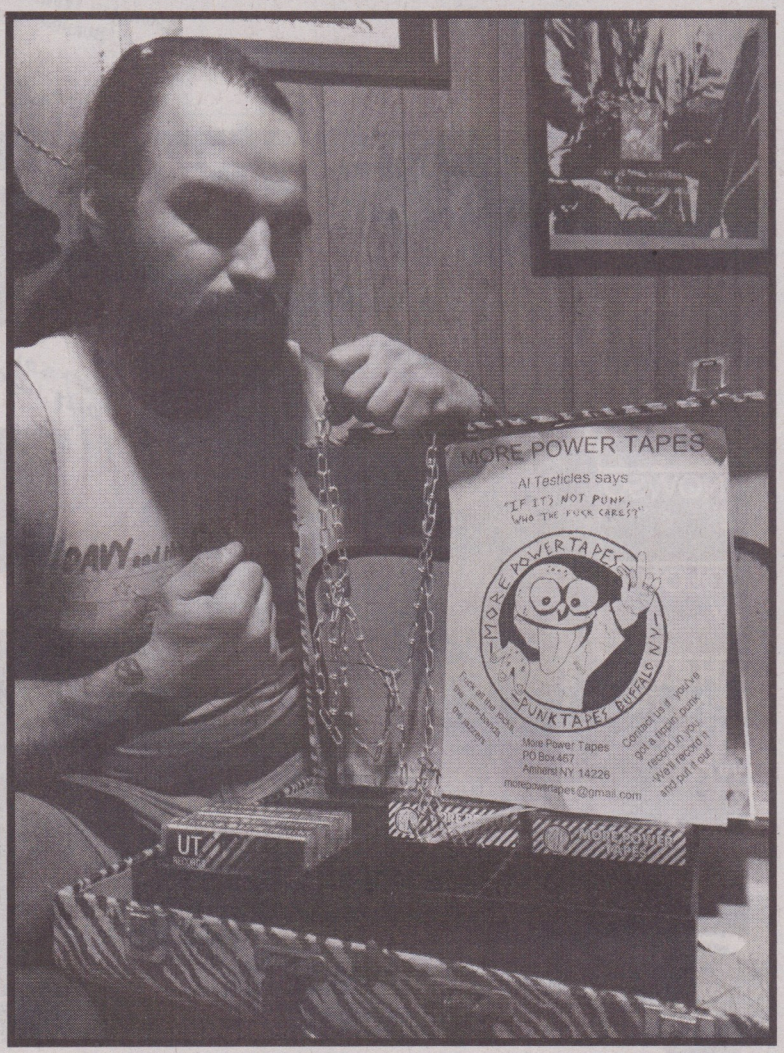

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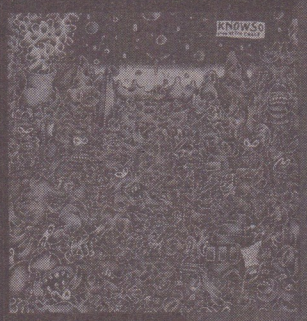

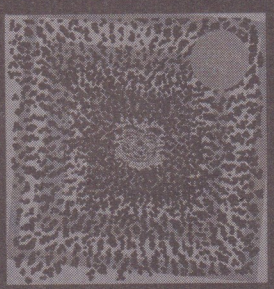

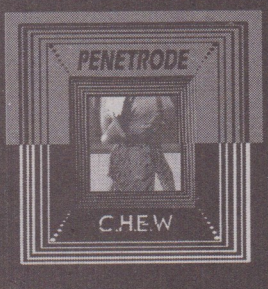

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F.I.T.S.

F.I.T.S. are a four piece from Montréal QC (Canada). Playing wild and out of control hardcore punk, their name is an abbreviation of "Feeding Illness To Society"—the title of their debut 7" released earlier this year. Listening to their music and seeing them spazz out live, I feel like this sentiment comes out a lot in the fast, angry, yet snotty music they produce; the yapping vocals are illegible, but read the lyrics and you relate to the feeling of someone trapped—despising the world around you, living in the grey of depression and resenting the monotony of life. All of the members of F.I.T.S. moved to Montréal within the last few years from small towns where French was their first language in this bilingual province of Canada. I tried to get a little deeper and go after their thoughts on struggles they've come across as not only ingrained problems in the divide between English and French, but also having a sound in the punk scene that is outside of what is usually related to Montréal. They flipped the coin and got a little stupider instead, keeping it lighthearted. It makes for a funny interview and worth the read to find out more about this Montréal band that plays within the scene you know but is a new wave and generation to keep punk in Montréal alive and exciting.

Interview by Christina Pap. Photo by Jeslyn Lam.

MRR: Who does what in F.I.T.S.?
Max: I normally play drums, but I am now on bass duty. Yves is on guitar.
Martin: I sing and I dance when I'm in a good mood.
Max: Jé is the original bassist, but he currently lives outside of the city and is often abroad so we got Perry to fill my spot on drums and I took over Jé's spot.
Perry: *Ice me.*

MRR: F.I.T.S. was active before coming into the scene that the international punk scene is more familiar with in Montréal. Where did you come out of?
Max: Actually we started the band to get involved in that scene. When I moved to the city, that scene was new to me and I wanted to be part of it. So I wrote a couple of songs and started jamming with my friends and F.I.T.S. was born.
Yves: We already knew each other from previous projects that had nothing to do with what were playing now.
Martin: I remember hanging out with Max, spinning records and deciding to just start a hardcore band where I would sing in, cuz I always wanted to do try vocals in a band like that.
Perry: I was still living in Peru at that time.

MRR: When did you move to Montréal and why? How did you get involved in the Montréal punk scene?
Yves: We all come from small towns and knew that our options to play music were limited. Moving to Montréal just made more sense to be as productive and be able to play as much music as we wanted to. All the good bands come from the city or go play there, it just seemed like the place to be.
Max: C'*est pas en region que ça se donne*!
Martin: What Yves said.

MRR: Montréal's scene can be divided by the deeply ingrained problems of this bilingual province. How much do you think this impacts the local punk community? What's your point of view coming into a community of punks whose primary first language is English when your own is French?
Martin: In general I really don't care. There shouldn't be divisions in punk. No borders. We all like the music and I don't think language should be a barrier from liking a band. As long as it's real and speaks the truth. I don't think it really affects us with gigs we play and the friends we make. Franco or anglo.
Max: Everyone we've met so far that know we aren't anglophones tries to talk to us in French. And we also work on our English. That's what I like about Montréal, people try!

MRR: I feel like Montréal generally has a heavier sound with punk: a pool of raw punk, crust, grind and more. How do you feel F.I.T.S., with more of a hardcore punk sound, is accepted into this?
Perry: We're heavy drinkers. That is our heavy side.
Yves: What? We're not raw enough?

MRR: You haven't played much outside of Montréal, what do you feel is stopping you? Do you feel the international punk scene is hard to break or more so you enjoy it more focusing on the city you're in and the projects in the punk scene you have going on?
Martin: Honestly, we're just too lazy. Also we're all in other projects that take up more time. Eventually we wanna play out of town more.
Perry: I might be moving back to Peru soon. Peru tour?
Yves: *Fuck borders*! Touring Canada, coast to coast, is really hard and kind of a pain in the ass. Getting into the states sucks even more when you are in a punk band with no visa. There's only so many cities you can play with driving from where we live.
Martin: But we will get over there soon enough.
Max: Life is a pile of shit. You gotta take care of your shit and nothing changes. Every day we talk about doing it but it's just not that easy.

MRR: What other bands or projects are members of F.I.T.S. otherwise involved with in the punk scene?
Max: Martin, Perry and myself have a side project called Ultrarat. I also play drums in Møblish. Total raw mangel.
Yves: I won't mention my ska band.

MRR: Tell us about the process of recording the F.I.T.S 7" that came out earlier this year.
Max: For the F.I.T.S. EP we did a live session like the other recordings we've done.
Martin: Max knows what's up and knows how it's gonna sound and I trust his instinct when we record. I trust no one else to record any of my projects. He is the actual best.

MRR: Max, you record a lot of bands in Montréal, can you give us some insight into your technique and what you try to achieve when recording new bands? Do you have a sound you're aiming for, a process you follow etc?
Max: It's easy. I always do the same thing all the time. I start by asking the band if they want a live or track by track session. I try to capture their energy and live sound of as much as I can. It's not always easy. So I try to push for live off the floor recordings instead of one track at the time. I generally feel more comfortable recording at Room 304, where bands like Drip, Anusol, Parasytes, No Negative, Zymotic, Powercup, Mueco, and countless other nameless projects start brewing.

MRR: Paint a picture of the current Montréal punk scene. What bands are good? Where do people go for shows?
Yves: My ska band.
Martin: Bands that I am stoked on from Montréal are: Zymotic, who play fucking good raw punk, Montréal style. Faze—they're some real fuckers doing their own thing. Cell fucking rules too, straightforward hardcore with sick as fuck riffs. Remwar are also crushing, they do what they do and it's perfect. Another band I'm also really stoked on is Max's other band, Møblish, Scandi style riffage type of deal.
Max: I think Martin mentioned most of the bands I wanted to give a shout out to that I haven't mentioned already.

MRR: What's good to listen to right now? What's on your turntable?
Martin: Tragiedia – *Punk 'Til Destruction* (Poland 88-89); Nazareth – *Greatest Hits*; Urchin – *How To Make Napalm* EP; DHK – EP; Accept – *Balls To The Wall* (Japanese pressing). Lots of DJ Screw too.
Max: Everyday at work I listen to the three Totalitär LPs. I have also been spinning the Human Gas 12" a lot. I'm also stoked on the Permission LP that La Vida Es Un Mus released recently. What else...Syndrome 81, Suburbanite...Also the new Durs Coeurs LP is really good!

MRR: Are you working on any new songs? New releases?
Martin: Yeah, for sure we're working on new material. We're taking our time.
Max: Started working on new songs, probably for another 7". But I've mostly been focusing on finishing the Ultrarat LP at the moment. So it's been harder to write for F.I.T.S. lately.

MRR: Last words?
Thanks to Nick Pappagiorgio, Matt Smith, JTA, Dan Pelissier, Christina Pap, and everyone who's been helping and supporting the band since we started!

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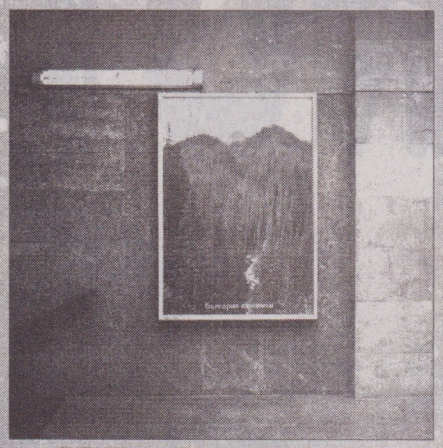

EXEK "Ahead of Two Thoughts" LP (W.25th)

Sophomore album from Melbourne four-piece pushes headlong into haunted, post-punk territories. Never-ending loops of dub-infected textures and anxious lyrics conjure the ghosts of PiL, This Heat and Swell Maps. Mastered by Mikey Young.

SOLID SPACE "Space Museum" LP (Dark Entries)

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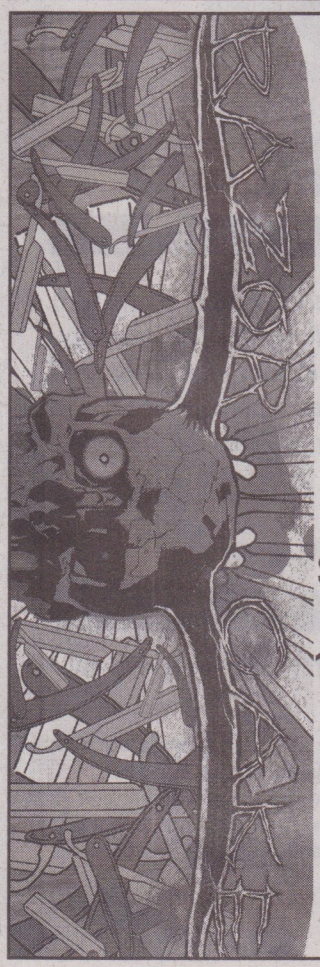

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NOT ON TOUR

Nir–bass
Mati–guitar
Gutzy–drums
Sima–vocals

If you've been around European melodic punk for the last few years, you most likely have at least crossed paths with the name Not On Tour. Not On Tour is a punk rock powerhouse from Tel Aviv, Israel. Their music ranges from anxiety-inducing hardcore punk to sweet pop punk, all done with contagious energy. They've been kicking ass all around Europe and Japan over the past few years, and it seems like nothing can stop them. After three albums, one EP, and a recent successful tour of Spain and Portugal, I had the opportunity to ask them a few questions. After this interview was completed, Not On Tour got to play with bands like Propagandhi and the Descendents.

Interview by Daniel Becker. Photos by David "Doh Doh" Rosen and Missaghast Photography.

MRR: Thank you so much for doing this interview. I've know npretty much all of you since we were way young, and I know that you've been in a lot of other bands. Can you say what other bands you all are currently in besides Not On Tour?

Gutzy: I play in Israel's street punk favorites City Rats, and we just got back from our European tour. In the past, I have played in pretty much every Israeli hardcore punk band.

Sima: I sing for a hardcore / powerviolence / punk band called Moom, and we also just got back from a European tour.

Mati: I play in the Betty Bears, which is a New Orleans-style swing band.

Nir: Also, both Gutzy and Mati used to play together in local punk band Shenkin Punks.

MRR: How did you all meet? Are you all close friends outside of the band? How important is friendship to the band?

Nir: We all knew each other growing up in the scene together and all of us played together in one way or another in other bands. It was just natural to try and play together as friends and see how it went. It went pretty well, I think.

Outside the band we hate each other's guts though. *[laughter]* Nah,

we love each other a lot and it feels like a second family. Being friends and having fun together is the most important thing in a band. I mean, it's punk rock, we're not doing this for a living, so we might as well have as much fun as we can and we have to be good friends for that. I don't see the point of playing together with people you don't actually like being with.

Gutzy: We're all old punk kids who were friends for years by the time Not On Tour started. I think that a lot of the character this band has is friendship between ourselves and our friends.

MRR: You toured Europe a bunch of times and just toured Japan for the first time. It seems you're always on the road. Why is your name Not On Tour when it seems like you're always on tour?

Nir: In the summer of 2008 or 2009, lots of Israeli bands were on tour. We had other bands with most of these people and we realized we were not going to play shows that summer. We decided to meet up, write a few fast hardcore songs ASAP, play as many shows as we could, and break up before the touring bastards returned to Israel. We decided to be called Not On Tour just to spite bands who were on tour.

Sima: We don't represent that name so well anymore but...fuck that.

MRR: You've played millions of shows by now but what's been your favorite Not On Tour show so far? What's the worst?

Nir: I'll have to name two favorite shows. The first one would have to be Groezrock 2015—that was amazing. It was an open air show and so many people who we've never met before came up to see us. Many of them were singing along. It was unbelievable for me. The second one would have to be at the Koro Club (RIP). We played a floor battle show with Kids Insane, another amazing band from Israel. The crowd was standing in the middle between the two bands and each band played two songs, then the other band would do the same. We also played covers of each other. It was crowded, sweaty, and super awesome.

MRR: Yeah I remember seeing the video of that show. It's on the internet. It looked like a really fun show and a really cool concept!

Nir: Worst show? Probably that one in a shithole town in Germany on our first tour. We played and these drunk fucks were shouting at Sima some German shit that meant that they want her to take her shirt off or something. We stopped playing in the middle of the set, packed our stuff, and hit the road.

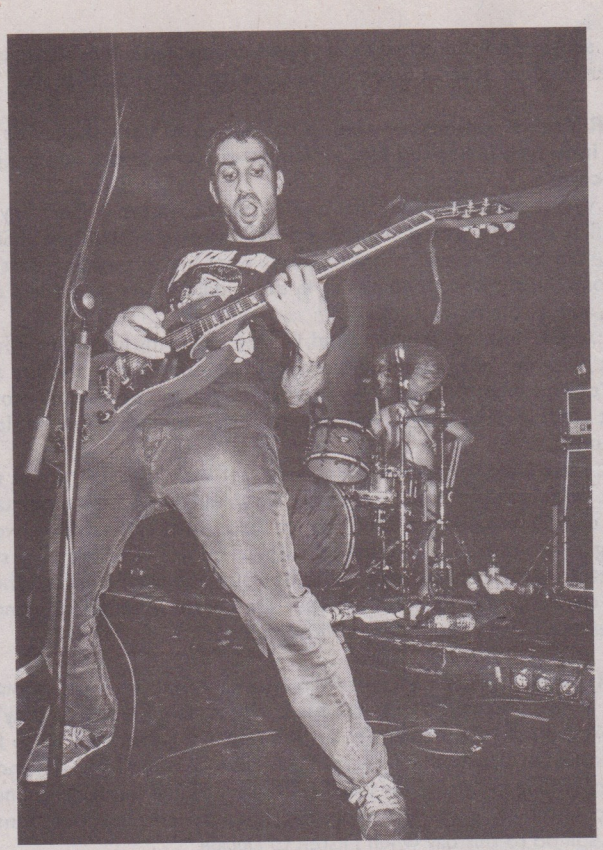
Mati: As the newcomer in the band, I'd have to say my first show, which took place in Haifa, was mind-blowing. I was excited and anxious and didn't know what to expect. As soon as we started playing the crowd went crazy and the energy was unbelievable. I couldn't get much sleep that night.

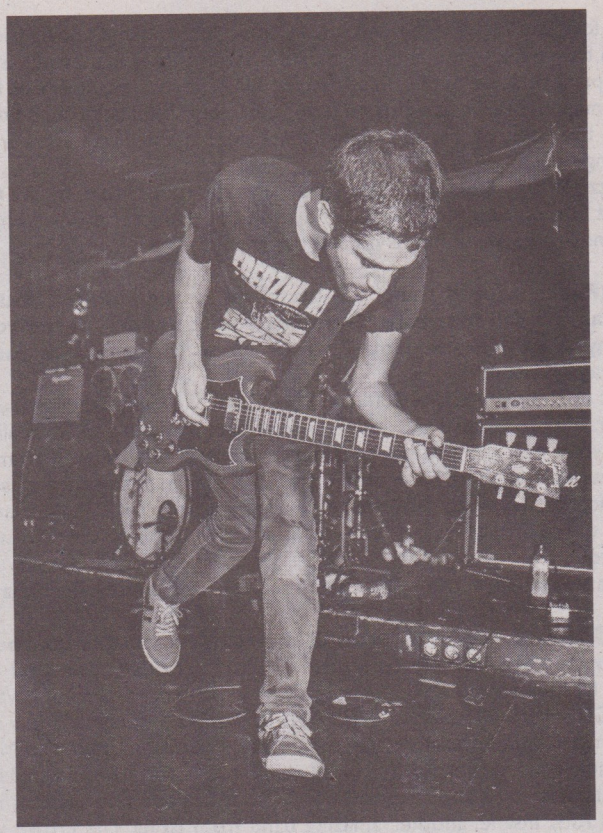
Sima: I also have to mention an acoustic set we did at 4:00 am at the Punk Rock Holidays beach stage after we already played the main stage that day. Some people waited around because they heard we were doing an acoustic set, and we didn't know if people would actually stay up that long for that. It turned out to be a 300-400 person packed show with crowd surfing to an acoustic set. One of the greatest moments I remember, along with the ones Nir mentioned!

MRR: What bands got you into punk? What was the album that made you say "Fuck it! This is the music I want to play?"

Nir: At the risk of sounding like a total geek I'm gonna have to go for Green Day— *Dookie*. I first heard "Basket Case" when I was ten and it did something for me on the inside—I still try to find this feeling in new music I listen to. It was just so moving, I had the craziest goosebumps and I still do to this day when I listen to *Dookie*.

Mati: I'd have to go with *Dookie* as well. As a kid I learned to play to





whole album on guitar and that became my power chord bible. A few years later I was at a Bo Labar (Israeli Hebrew-language punk rock band with members of Useless ID) show, and I loved the humorous and "fuck it all" vibe, which made me start a band with Gutzy called Shenkin Punks.
Sima: Good Riddance, Descendents, and 7 Seconds. There's a lot more but those three for sure made an influence on the way I wanna sing, sound, and write.

MRR: What does it mean to be a punk in Israel?
Gutzy: I think it's nothing special. Like, for most cases there is little persecution of punks and other freaks in comparison to many European countries, but organized right wing groups are definitely getting stronger so I don't know what the future will bring on that matter. Other than that, fuck, does it even matter? There are very few "rebellious" punks in Israel who aren't worn out by our inability to change anything significant here. They either stop their involvement with politics, punk, or both, and who could blame them? What do they get from being punks, or even a decent person with a desire for change in this place? I mean, I know many political punks in other countries who disregard this and celebrate their non-conforming existence, which is great and all, but it was a breaking point for many punkers here.

MRR: How is the punk scene in Israel right now? What are some of the best current bands?
Gutzy: Except for Haifa, there are hardly any kids and there are just some old bands who perform every few months. Since the Koro Club and Zimmer Club closed down, there's no significant presence of punk in this country.
Nir: I sadly support that and call all the misfits and weirdos in Israel to start new punk bands.
Sima: I agree but still think that it comes and goes. Over the years, we've noticed that you think it's dead, and then you see some kids you never saw before that are there for the first time and it's always a good feeling. Hope we'll get to see it over and over again here. It's so small that each of them counts!

MRR: Can you talk about the Koro Club? What was your relationship to the club?
Gutzy: I was one of the ten people who ran the Koro Club. Most of the others play in several other bands. We took it over in 2013 when the Rogatka Club was closing down. We were terrified that we were going to lose one of the oldest establishments in Israeli punk, as it and the club before it (the Patiphone) were probably the only independent venues to consistently have and be associated with punk shows. We took it as a practice space, despite it coming with some inherent problems, and we had shows there on weekends. It was really great. We even had Comeback Kid playing a surprise show, destroying the place with much more than the place can ever handle. Full capacity was 70, so you can imagine how it looked. However, it was evident that no matter what we tried we weren't making any money, and everything was going to cover our costs and we had to pay up whenever there was a major expense or something big broke down. Generally speaking, the city of Tel Aviv disapproves of our kinds of spaces because industrial areas which yield little money can be easily converted into highly priced, substandard flat zones. Gentrification took place, and from the two friendly neighbors in the next building we had in the start, we ended up with almost one hundred only two years later and a city who considered us a nuisance. Between this and the fact that we were making zero money, taking us down was a matter of a few devastating fines of several thousand shekels a few nights in a row, and we were out. And so I concluded my experience of running a DIY space in Tel Aviv. I will probably not do it again.
Sima: The first punk show I saw when I was 13–14 was there when it was called the Patiphone, and since then it was sort of the CBGB of Tel Aviv. It was an end of an era. Hopefully it made room for a new one to come.

MRR: With many venues in Israel getting shut down, what are people doing to keep DIY punk alive?
Sima: Booking shows at other venues that accept punk and metal bands.

MRR: Do you feel like you get overly politicized being a punk band from Israel? I feel like sometimes being from Israel, you're held to a different standard politically compared to bands or people from the US or Europe. It's not like other Western governments are better or worse than Israel's, but

there's an ongoing boycott on Israel and the country is always politicized in everything because of the current situation in the Occupied Territories. Would you agree with that? Can you talk about any experiences you've had with this? Have you ever been boycotted for being from Israel? Also, I also know of a lot of bands from Israel who have been targeted by neo-Nazi groups in Europe. Have you ever been targeted by neo-Nazis?

Gutzy: We weren't really targeted, and even when we were, it was always clear that someone probably had a personal motive in this. But what can I say, I agree that boycott is a legitimate measure for everything really. Like, there are laws being passed in this country that say that boycotting settlements is illegal, and I don't really understand what it means, does it force me to make an unfaithful choice when considering different products at the supermarket? I definitely think it's legitimate and having a little influence on the course of politics here, so I can't disapprove of it. However I think that there's a bit of mindlessness in the international boycott movement, especially considering where activists are mostly located and their own government's relationship with that of Israel. Or maybe the fact that the boycott has a big focus on cultural and academic aspects of Israeli civil society. While I don't really see the point of focusing on these areas, arguing for this boycott and hiding behind the fact that "the Palestinian civil society has requested us to boycott these things," does not make it a more legitimate target than the millions or billions of dollars that the boycotters' own governments funnel to the Israeli military industry, fueling the conflict and going uninterrupted. I mean, it just doesn't make sense that the artists and academics who are amazing and peaceful people are feeling less comfortable doing their jobs than the arms dealers and politicians. Why can't this be a thing? Why can't you clean up your own government's hands before you go after the musicians? *[We disagree. One can put pressure on a government and still participate in an economic boycott. —Ed.]*

Sima: Yeah, I noticed that I used to hate the fact that I'm from Israel and that the band is from Israel. We're not a political or activist band, except for some songs, and I felt bad about it sometimes. But over the years, I thought about the fact that we're a living example of people who are just making music to do good and spread love and punk around the world. We're not representing a nation nor a religion. We speak for ourselves, as each and every person should be doing. We're very open to talk about what goes on in our country and criticize it too, as one should. We never had so much as a problem on tour—we've always had people welcome us to their houses and we felt safe on tour and at home. I think it's an automatic thing for people to ask about Israel, because it's constantly on the news, but they would usually not ask a band from the United States, for example, about their economy or the violence rate in their country, so sometimes it feels like were the black sheep of countries to come from. We get why, though.

MRR: I feel you on that. US bands aren't really questioned also about the involvement of their government in wars outside of America. I wanna get back to talking about the music. Your third LP *Bad Habits* just came out last year. It's fucking amazing! I feel like there's definitely more melodic punk rock songs than hardcore songs, compared to the first two albums. Is that something that was intentional or kind of just came out that way?

Gutzy: I think we're just exploring every time we write new music, like I guess our EP from 2011 was our most melodic, and our later stuff got more hardcore, then we switched back—perhaps we're really running inside a constrained bubble of ideas and influences and we just bounce around its edges. But then again, I think it's a really introverted and dark album in comparison to the others, and when we recorded it and before we picked the order of the songs I used to listen to it in the recorded order and it really fit our mindset at the time which wasn't that happy for all sorts of reasons, but when we picked the order of the songs and put "Flip" as the first song, while it was track ten or eleven on the original recording, it suddenly painted the entire album as a happy, fast-ish melodic album. It's amazing how that affects everything.

MRR: Which Not On Tour release are you most proud of? Which one would you recommend to someone who's never heard you before?

Nir: I feel like I'm always the most proud of our latest record—at the point we're ready to record it we've all gone through the process of changing, moving, and dissecting the hell out of these songs. If they still

exist then, it means we all love them and think they're fun. So naturally I think *Bad Habits* is our best record yet. Still, many people tell me that *All This Time* is their favorite record so if you don't know us I'd have to say listen to *All This Time* and then throw it away and listen to *Bad Habits*.

MRR: You play a lot of DIY shows but also have played with a lot of bigger bands. What are some of the bands you had most fun sharing the stage with?
Nir: I'd have to say Masked Intruder were my favorites. We played a show with them and Teenage Bottlerocket in Paris two years ago. We got fucked over with no proper backline. We were super stressed out and the promoter was too, because we're the support band and there's no way the big guys will let us play on their gear. We got some courage and went up to Blue (guitars, vocals) and he was the coolest sweetest guy ever. He didn't even hesitate and said we can play on all of Masked Intruder's gear, which was really good, and that felt really good. It's also a reminder to myself to be the best I can be with support bands. Needless to say, that made the show kickass and we also got a chance to hang and talk with the masked ones which was fun as hell.

MRR: What are your favorite punk bands currently?
Nir: Frenzal Rhomb for sure, Face To Face, Dillinger Four, Dead To Me, Useless ID, Flatliners, Pup...There are way too many.

MRR: What do you listen to outside of punk?
Nir: I like alternative metal kind of stuff like Queens Of The Stone Age, Mastodon, Baroness and even grungy shit like Rival Schools, which I'm spinning hard lately.
Gutzy: I listen to some old school thrash / death metal, but now I'm mostly listening to obscure Middle Eastern musicians I find online.
Sima: Different types of hip hop, black metal, powerviolence, metal, sludge, some folk and classical music.
Mati: I listen to alot of other stuff besides punk, but there is music that affects my punk playing and writing such as Pixies, My Bloody Valentine, Sonic Youth and other slurred rock bands. Also acoustic rock such as Elliot Smith.

MRR: You seem to always be touring. What do you do outside of punk? How do you get all this time off?
Mati: I teach guitar and work in the music industry playing gigs and editing music sheets. I get time off when I decide to put work aside. It's not easy but I have the best significant other who fully supports me.
Nir: Actually we don't get all this time off but I'm happy it seems that way! I work in the online advertising industry which is computer and office work and I go crazy sometimes. Tours are like a breath of fresh air. It's not that easy getting time off so I just never take any vacation days and save them all for the tours.
Sima: I'm currently acting in a musical comedy in the theatre and working at a local bar.

MRR: What are you currently working on? What does the future look like for Not On Tour? When do we get to see you here in the States?
Nir: We are now in the process of writing songs for our new album. Just playing around with stuff, trying new riffs, and most importantly keeping it fun. We are going to tour Spain and Portugal at the end of October for the first time and we're really looking forward to that. We have to come to the United States at some point, but probably not this year. We're aiming for next summer.
Gutzy: We just came back from a ten day tour in Spain and Portugal, put together by a super collaboration of six awesome DIY collectives, and we are going to play ten dates in Europe this January, mainly in Germany.
Sima: Next summer I'm sure we will!

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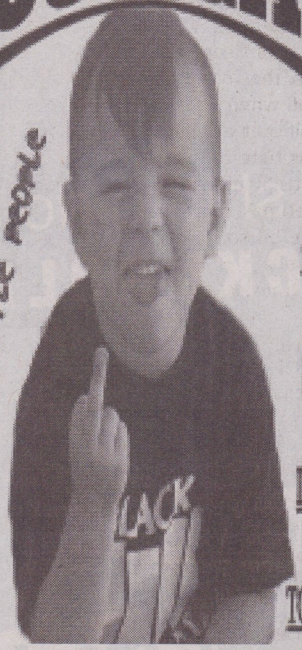

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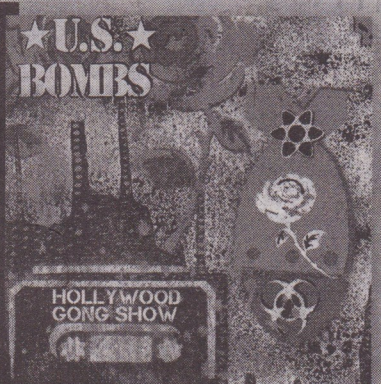

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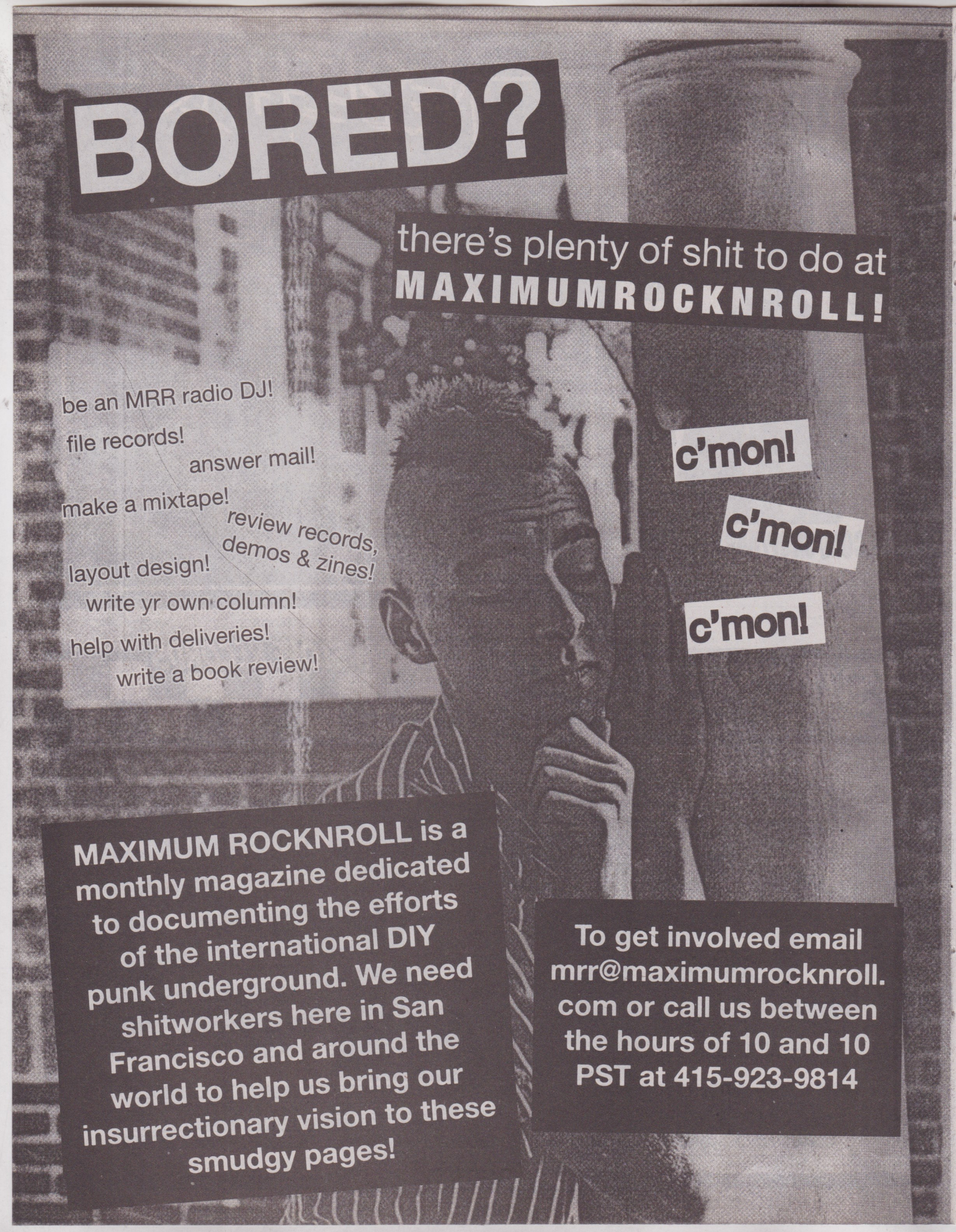
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Additional questions by Joan DeToro.

Photos by Discontinuous Innovations, Maxie, and Bubger

In 5th grade, as an anxious young dork with no real identity other than an affinity for Weird Al and Michael Crichton books, I befriended a kid named Andrew. He was nice and had he masked his nigh-pubescent chicken soup smell with some sort of herbal oils and clung to his style of ill-fitting sweaters and khakis, he probably would've turned out to be some sort of goofball tastemaker. However, I could not foresee his potential coolness and instead, felt trapped and inhibited by his friendship. There wasn't anything wrong with Andrew, it was that he was obsessed with this fucking video game, MechWarrior 2, *and my entire class had adopted* Beavis and Butthead *personas where they chuckled incessantly at any goddamn concept that could somehow be perverted into having a sexual meaning. For a young boy who was very ashamed of his physical body, this was confusing and frightening terrain to traverse—and was not made any easier by my smelly friend, Andrew, coming up to me in front of people and loudly asking,* "Hey Drew, do ya wanna talk about mechs?"

While I have since apologized to Andrew for beating him up and ending our friendship (he didn't give a fuck, nor did he remember me), the incident did not dissuade me from rolling the dice and engaging in friendships with fucking weirdos. Connie Voltaire, AKA Neo Neos, is a fucking weirdo. But the thing that separates Connie from a person like Andrew is that Connie has an understanding of this peculiarity, and puts it to good use by making some catchy tunes and unapologetically saying shit that timid midwesterners think, but never dare speak. Like when we were chatting outside of the Fraternal Order of Eagles #34 at 2am and a minivan full of losers pulled up and started quizzing us as to where the nearest basketball court was. As I was composing a late-night response of "aw shucks golly gee whiz well y'see hmm," Connie was already yelling, "Do I fuckin' look like I know where a basketball court is at 2am?"

What I'm getting at here is that sometimes the activity of befriending a weirdo is shit that pays off. Here's words from Connie, dispensed through the internet and also spoken in the bed and mattress section of Macy's at the Mall of America while some guys with neck tattoos sized us up.

MRR: Let's get the boring stuff outta the way. How old are you? When did you first get into punk, and would you be embarrassed by the bands that you liked then?
Much to my own surprise, I'm 25 years old. It's hard to pinpoint the first punk track I really got into. I had some exposure to it through the Tony Hawk games, and before that when I was six or so, my daycare owner's son would listen to the Offspring. The first time it really clicked with me was listening to the songs in the Guitar Hero games, though I was into math rock before that if you can count that as punk. Thankfully I managed to avoid anything I'd find embarrassing today.

MRR: You didn't love the Offspring for forever either, when did you get into quote unquote real punk?
Oh I didn't even listen to the Offspring, I only realized that's what I had been exposed to as a kid when I was in college and noticed an Offspring album cover that looked like something I had seen as a child.

MRR: How did you find out about other punk shit? Was it through the internet?
Oh yeah, through and through. I never met anyone else into punk until college and even then we weren't friends so I never really talked with them about it.

MRR: So what were other people's reactions, like say when you were in high school, when you talked to them about punk? Did anybody "get" it? Or did they think you were bonkers?
I never talked to them about it to begin with!

MRR: Did you only talk to people about punk online?
Pretty much, yeah. what is there to talk to people about punk if they don't care about it?

MRR: You never were like "hey, have you heard this band? They fucking rip!" or "hey, there's a show tonight at the civic center or whatever, wanna come?"
I work under the assumption that most people, and understandably so, don't enjoy the genre. I don't feel a need or desire to try to expose others to it unless they clearly indicate they'd like to try it. Not being raised in the cities, I didn't have an in to know about any house shows, which were the only ones that weren't 21+ so shows were out of the question even for me on my own until then.

MRR: Sometimes I feel like nobody gives a shit about music. If I stood in front of a crowd of 100 people and said a band is really important, like fuckin' Perverts Again, who I talk about endlessly...I think truly only six people have listened to Perverts Again because of me, despite maybe 600 people hearing me talk about Perverts Again.
It's a lot more than zero though.

MRR: Yeah, six is an incredible increase over zero.
I could tell people all day to listen to the SS. Who cares?

MRR: Your interaction with punk for most of your formative years was indirect, through the internet. How has this affected your views on punk as a whole?
Well it definitely kept me in the '80s so to speak, since there was nobody around to push new stuff on me for better or worse. Outside of that I have no idea what could've been.

MRR: How long did it take for you to get involved with the modern punk world? What was your gateway into that?
As soon as turned 21 I started seeing just about any band that played at a bar called the Hexagon. I think that would have been 2013? From there I met a few people, started going to house shows, and so on. The local scene was really thriving then, with such great bands as Brain Tumors, the Miami Dolphins, and Real Numbers. I could catch plenty of quality touring bands, like Mr. Dad, Bad Noids, and so on and so forth. So there was no shortage of good shows.

MRR: So how did you begin your career as a recording artist extraordinaire? When did you first start recording, and why?
My first times recording were joke recordings with my little brother, then I tried to do some "serious covers" to learn how to record and to practice instruments. The first songs I wrote were thrash songs but I couldn't play drums well enough to record them for a few years. As for why, it was just for the hell of it, to see what I could do, if I could make stuff that sounded like stuff I liked.

MRR: How long ago was that? When did that evolve into Neo Neos?
My first recordings were in 2008 I think and I finished my first album of original material in 2011. Neo Neos actually started as a live band as a two piece with Tom of the local band Blood Cookie.

MRR: So what happened to Tom? Are y'all still pals?
Yeah, we just stopped practicing for no particular reason that I can recall. He still plays in Blood Cookie, which is a good band that has been going for a while but doesn't really tour.

MRR: Let's talk about your artwork for your tapes. Some of the Neo Neos tapes have an aesthetic that feels similar to some older punk releases. Was that your aim with them? Do you have a broader aesthetic goal in mind?
Most of my inspiration comes from Reid Miles of Blue Note fame, and the number of artists Impulse Records employed. I really like those striking fonts and typography.

MRR: That's not at all what I expected to hear from a sneering punk like yourself. When did you get interested

in their work?
Just from seeing it, I suppose. All those hard bop-era labels have great album covers.

MRR: They definitely do. But it's pretty different from a lot of the modern punk aesthetic! Are there people within punk whose art style you look up to? Or is it all shit?
I really enjoy the what you could call a "safety manual" aesthetic Nick does for Discontinuous Innovations and Erik Hart has a great eye for design with all sorts of different cool, very striking stuff. Great font work too.

MRR: I kind of wonder if people who get into all these scribble art construction paper demo tapes...Are they just amused by it because they haven't heard older, weird, wacky bands from the '70s and '80s and will just drop it when they get their fill and move on to EDM?
There certainly is a boom of sorts. I don't think it has legs.

MRR: Do you consider yourself a part of that boom?
I don't think I chose to but I've been associated with it, like I've been lumped in with "devo-core" certainly. Just the nature of the fact I was on the Jimmy Youtube channel, if you got put on there people will lump you in with that. Lots of people just call that "Jimmy Punk." Bands like Warm Bodies and anything from NWI is considered Jimmy Punk, people use that term to sum that whole movement up.

MRR: I thought so much of what that dude posted was just forgettable nonsense.
That's what I liked about him. I wouldn't have been put up on his channel if not for the fact he would put up music by anyone that asked to be on there. That said, he attracted a lot of bands that sounded similar to NWI and Midwest stuff because that's what the channel started with before he was taking requests. At the same time, there were a lot of people who liked what he uploaded but would just send garbage that didn't match his general sound for self promotion and he either didn't know how to say no or simply didn't care. People saw it as a heavily curated thing, but my understanding was that it wasn't really, though I assume he didn't upload anything he hated exactly.

MRR: When do you think the whole "Devo-core" or "Jimmy-core" phenomenon will end? Is it over already?
What people decide to call either of those things has always eluded me honestly. I'm no expert.

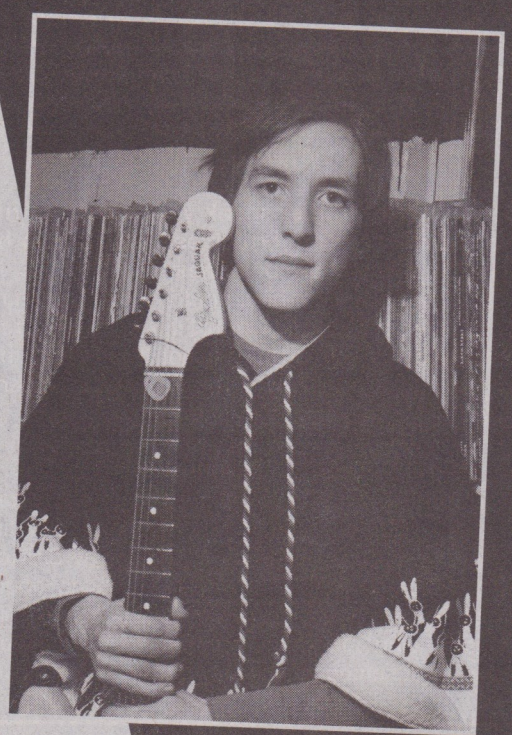
MRR: What do you think will be the next style everyone will copy?
Doing the Sheer Mag glam rock / Fleetwood Mac pop rock shtick is real big right now. It's hard to say what'll come next. If I'm lucky it'll be Sham 69, if I'm unlucky it'll be rockabilly. Or if I'm *really* unlucky it will be the Smiths. All to imply future music trends are based around how much luck I have and nothing else. *[laughter]*

MRR: I heard someone say one of your Neo Neos releases was just an attempt to piss off Coneheads or something. Is this true? And how serious is Neo Neos?
Depends on what you would consider serious or not serious. I don't take it all that seriously, it's just something I do for fun and attention. I've done some lazy jabs and aping of the Conehead boys in my time but only with the hopes of bringing some humor and fun into whatever you want to call the modern US "punk" scene. Too many people and bands take themselves so seriously.

MRR: Why do you think people take this shit so seriously in 2018? Do you feel like punk is capable of being subversive or is it an excuse to wear a leather jacket for most people?
That's a hard one. Most people I know are wearing black denim jackets anyway. All I can tell you is that the Downtown Boys are bad! Hope does something for ya.

MRR: What are some non-musical works that have influenced you and Neo Neos?
A lot of my lyrics are about anime and Japanese cinema. It's certainly not nerdy or lame at all. *[laughter]* I have a hard time writing lyrics so going to those for inspiration can be really helpful. I find a surprising amount of depth in them, particularly the films of Satoshi Kon and Sion Sono. The messages really resonate with me. Sono dwells a lot on societal roles and Kon perceptions of reality. I highly recommend people check out their films.

MRR: How do you take those elements and apply them to your lyrics? Are you directly describing the plots of these works?
Sometimes yeah, but other times I'm taking a small portion of it and breaking it down or trying to share my interpretation. For example, "The Hammer of Civilization" is taken from a line from an anime called *Tanya the Evil*, where the artillery is launched on an unsuspecting battalion. To me I took from that the idea that civilization as a concept from its inception has a tendency towards self-annihilation. Civilization itself being a hammer, a weapon given to the human race, that it will bash itself over the head with until humans are wiped out.



MRR: So I take it that you're a pretty negative person then? Do you generally have a dark worldview?
Maybe relative to other people. I don't see it that way necessarily, like self-annihilation isn't a bad thing *per se*. It might be better if it didn't happen but for all I know it would be better if it did.

MRR: Connie, you kind of have a reputation for being kind of outspoken and even somewhat brash. Do you feel this holds you back from becoming an indie darling of the Minneapolis scene?
Telling people you dislike basically any bands doesn't go over well with most people here. I'm not gonna hold it against anybody, but the few people I get along with are those that don't take that kind of thing personally when I say I don't like something they like, and are generally in bands I like anyway, so it works out. I don't feel the need to go out of the way to say that sort of thing but I also can't stand the awkward silence after someone says they like something that you don't.

MRR: Would you rather speak your mind and risk losing those "networking opportunities" rather than hold your tongue? Is it worth it to be honest?
It's just the way I am, for better or for worse. I can't really help it. As far as what it may be worth, I guess it varies from person to person, but at this point I try not think about that since I don't feel I really have a choice either way, at a certain point I'm just gonna do what I'm gonna do.

MRR: Have you received any hate mail?
Not yet, but I'm certain there are plenty of people who don't like me or what I do. It seems like we're definitely in a time where people really avoid talking about things they dislike because they're afraid of losing whatever "networking opportunities" that may present. Two things people that go to punk shows hate doing is dancing and telling other people they dislike music by someone that someone they know might know or like.

MRR: You have already shittalked Downtown Boys, do ya wanna bring the hammer down publicly on anybody else?
How about...I don't know, just name any shoegaze band. I'm always complaining about bands I'm jealous of but I'm drawing a blank right now.

MRR: Is anything from Bob Mould out of Hüsker Dü worth listening to?
Absolutely not. The man is a total prick. Looking forward to him swooping down from his New York loft to grace us at the Superbowl or whatever.

MRR: You have a song called "I Hate Keyboard Punk." What specifically are you referring to?
The irony is after I wrote that song (which will appear on the upcoming first album!) I saw some keyboard acts I really like! But it was never about all that anyway really. More specifically I hate hearing riffs that would sound great or good songwriting ruined by drum machines and super loud keys. Just go play the drums and pick up a guitar.

MRR: The Bandcamp for your label (Another Label) has over 30 releases. Are all of them good?
Oh no, I don't think a single one of them is any good, really.

MRR: Which one do you recommend as a nice entry point for your output?
The most popular thing statistically I've put out is the first Neo Neos tape, so I suppose that one. *EP2.2* is the work I'm most proud of that's available right now though, and my second album (to be released sometime this year) I think is the best thing I've done, however.

MRR: What is Bee-B-B?
Just another project like Neo Neos or anything else I've done. With that one I was trying to capture some of wild energy of the early Meat Puppets, or what Big Zit was doing. Rest in power.

MRR: How much of your material do you throw away?
Recently I've become more picky, so there's like ten or so songs I've thrown out or released in places no one would really notice, but it all comes out sooner or later, mostly because I don't like to have unfinished songs sitting on my hard drive in case it crashes.

MRR: You have a live band, but it's just you on all of the recordings, right? Other than recorded live sets, will you allow these human beings to write music and play on records, or is this simply the Connie Show?
Neotypes is what I would call "the live band" of Neo Neos, sort of like maybe the difference between Neil Young and that Crazy Horse band except if he was in Crazy Horse. I think that makes sense. We started just playing Neo Neos songs but now we've been writing original songs and making it a good mix of the two. When we have enough original material I want to make a Neotypes record that they play on. Everyone needs to hear Ben Manthe's wild guitar solos. The man can shred.

MRR: You told me that it's easier for you to write music if someone has directed you—does this mean that for your sake, people should contact you with requests of music to write for them?
Oh yeah, I just love emails in general. Hit me up on that bandcamp contact button, boys. I'll drop bombs on your mixtapes all day.

MRR: Aside from obvious sex jokes, what physical releases do you have coming up?
I got that *EP2* that just came out on the new label, Cultural, ran by John Alberty of Bulsch fame, *EP1* which has been out a few months on It's Trash of *Killed by Meth* fame, and an album that as far as I'm aware will be out very soon on Neck Chop. There's another album I have recorded and finished that's theoretically going to be released this year but I'm not sure how many details I can give on that, not that I have many myself.

MRR: Regarding your first LP...how did that come about? How'd you get hooked up with Mr. Neck Chop? Is this a solo record?
Brandon just sent me an email about getting some tapes and then he offered to put out a record. That's how both of my EPs happened as well. Thanks internet! The LP is mostly re-recordings of songs from the first four tapes with a few new songs, and some of the old songs are reinterpreted, all recorded by me and me and me.

MRR: What else are you working on besides Neo Neos and Neotypes?
I'm working on a "mixtape" of sorts...Not sure what will come of that but I've got maybe six or seven new songs for it and I'm trying to get songs from other people (contact me if you want to be on it). I'm working on a project with Nick Oka (of Toyota and Scantron) and Erik Hart (AKA Erik Nervous), which is coming along slowly but surely. Outside of that there's nothing I have started work on, but when I do start things it doesn't take me long to finish them, so for all I know I could complete some project I've been wanting to do or another two weeks from now.

MRR: Do you have any other bands that you're really interested in paying homage to but haven't because you don't feel like you'd be able to do it justice?
Well I listen to a lot of jazz. I don't see myself being overly proficient in playing jazz any time soon, but in theory I'd love to play it again (I did briefly in high school).

MRR: Do you have any touring plans with Neotypes?
We're hoping to go to Cleveland in April. I have a maximum of one contact in any city in the US so touring is not something that will come to us easily, but I'll try sooner or later. Here's hoping we'll get flown out to Burger Boogaloo in 2019 after we turn into a Ty Segall band.

MRR: This isn't a question, but you said once that when you see drunk men, you imagine they are using all of their willpower to not call something "gay"—I just wanted you to know how much I appreciate that.
My pleasure.

Contact Neo Neos at vedicardi@gmail.com

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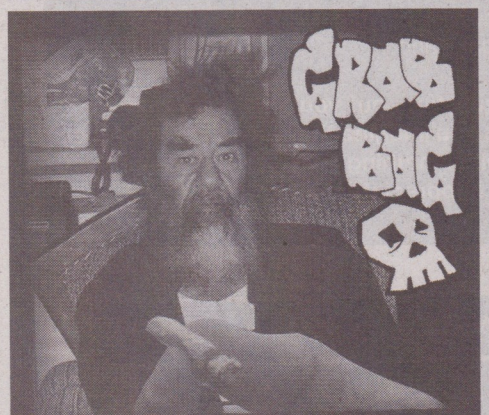
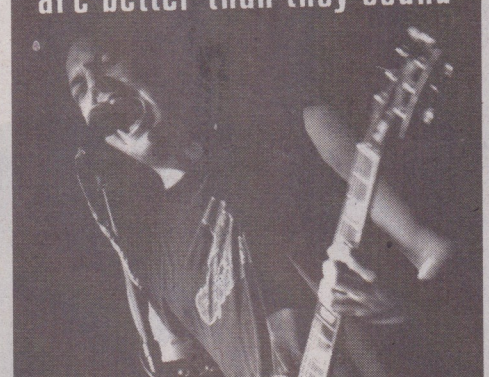


Sometimes local legends are better than they sound



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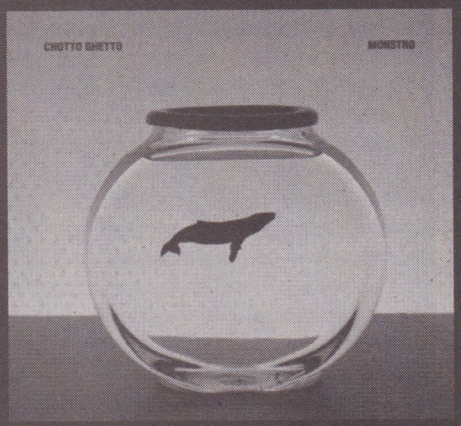

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SNOB

Introduction and interview by Donna D-Stroy of Nachthexen.

Photos by Joe Briggs, Ben Graham, Andrew Northrop, Simon Parrish, and Jack Pitt.

Snob are a London band formed in 2013 who consist of Ellie Roberts on guitar, John Andrews on bass, Fran Wetherilt on vocals and Oli Powe smashing the drums. Their songs are some of my favorite punk songs of all time, not because they became so familiar due to having the pleasure of touring with them, but they create earworms of discordant guitar riffs, interesting time changes and quietly aggressive vocals. Reminiscent of Rudimentary Peni crossed with Gauze, Snob create a bastard punk child who is screaming for change, an end to the age of men, and allies in the battle for the rise of queers, sissies and women. Despite these comparisons, no other bands really sound like Snob. The vocals are unique in their sound, sometimes talking over the instruments with ferocity, sometimes deep and reverberated, with unusual and easily relatable themes such as sex toys, micro-aggressions and dealing with bullshit through absurdist humor and sarcasm. Combine these vocals with Ellie's almost-angular guitar riffs, John's relentless bass with slight sludgy undertones and with Oli's harder-than-was-thought-humanly-possible drumming style, you have an unconventional sound which is welcomed into the punk fold. If you are looking for a band who are refreshing and relevant, then Snob are it. They have two self-released 7"s and have an LP coming out on La Vida Es Un Mus.

MRR: How did you get together as a band, and what's behind the name?

Ellie Roberts: We were all friends, mainly through music, and we thought it would be nice to play things we hadn't played before together. So, Oli's playing drums for the first time, I'm playing guitar for the first time...John had you played bass before?

John Andrews: No, but the origins of this band are actually in another band, if I recall correctly, called Shrews?

Ellie: Fran and I had unsuccessfully tried to do a band. It was a bit of a shame that it didn't quite work out but we both realized we wanted to do something with a bit of a harder sound together.

John: I remember that you guys had all decided you were going to form the band and I felt left out!

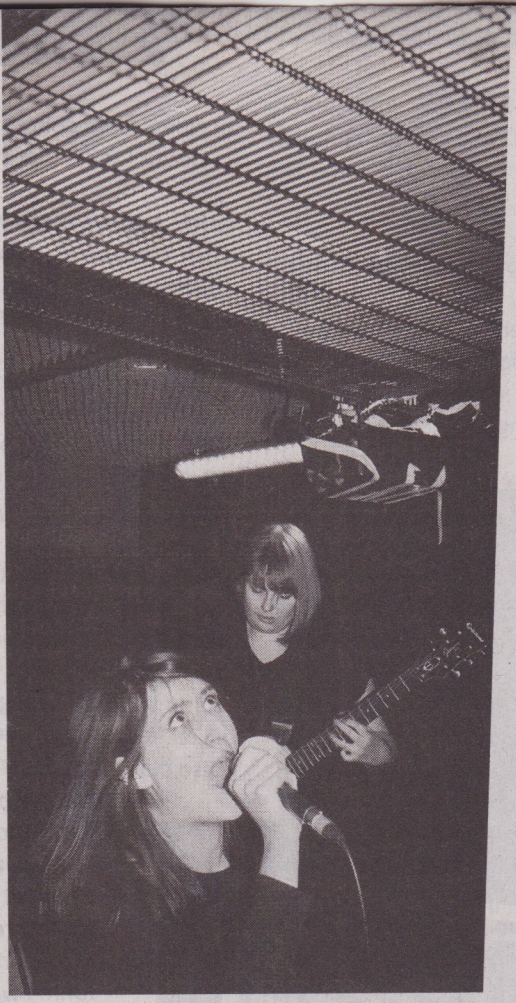
Ellie: Ahh...John invited himself...
Fran Wetherilt: And here we are!
Ellie: Snob comes mainly from the fact that me and Oli are snobs.
John: Yes, I would accept that...*[laughter]*
Oli Powe: I think I chose Snob because I would say the Foo Fighters were shit or something, and someone would call me a snob, so that would shut me up!

MRR: How did each of you discover the DIY punk scene to start with, and how has it formulated the people that you are today?
Ellie: I found it initially through listening to things like Rancid and Hellcat Records as a kid. Then I got onto message boards and MSN Messenger when I was about 14 or 15 years old, and from there I was travelling around the country, lying to my parents, and going to DIY gigs and house shows and things. As someone who grew up in a rural place, meeting people and finding music through the internet changed my life! They were all older kids, and they introduced me to new ways of thinking about things I'd never even thought of before—like, maybe not everyone should have kids and get married! I also came into contact with art and philosophy and stuff, and I got excited about how music could link to those ideas. The missing element was that most of the people I met were older men and there was little or no interrogation of gender or sexual politics. When I went to university, I moved to Bristol and started putting on gigs with friends there. It was mostly whatever was coming through town, stuff that was big at the time like screamo, crust punk and noise rock stuff—very male-dominated and not necessarily stuff I have an affinity for now. Things like Lady Fest were happening but the scenes didn't really feel connected up and there weren't local feminist or queer bands that were particularly loud or shouty that I can remember. I later moved to London and that's when I really started making strong connections with women about music and getting excited about actually being in bands. Back then, around 2010, London gigs saw a handful of women in bands such as Woolf, Pettybone, and Sceptres. I'd also started singing in a band, Good Throb, with Bryony who sang in Sceptres. But it was slightly after that, I think, that there was a big seismic culture shift and lots of women were doing stuff and it felt like this cool feeling of permissiveness!
Fran: I was into nu metal as a teenager, then grunge. Then it plateaued for me in my late teens and early twenties, until I met John. Then I started going to screamo gigs, which were fun. I had a couple of friends who were women and were inspiring, but a lot of it was still very blokey in that scene. It was probably through Ellie mostly—she made me a mixtape called something like *Horrible Noisy Women* or something, and I guess that was my entry into it.
Ellie: A firework just went off! That's amazing!
John: I was into indie and some punk stuff. I liked Dischord Records. I went to university in Canterbury and Oli put on shows in Margate when I was there. I went to one of his shows and moshed into him into a post-rock / sludge band set.
Oli: It was Brain Dead wasn't it?!
John: I think Brain Dead were headlining but it was a local band I moshed into you during. I remember feeling sort of threatened by this singer from Brain Dead. I thought he was going to headbutt me or something. He was quite a small guy as I recall but very wiry and muscly! Anyway, I started going to more shows and meeting people, and then finding out about more bands and things like that.
Oli: I grew up in Kent, and actually at that time, when I was about 13 or 14 there was a really big hardcore scene in Leeds and Sheffield. It was one of the epicentres of camo shorts-wearing kind of stuff, with big X's on the hands. At one of the first gigs I went to I saw lots of windmilling and I thought, "Fucking hell, these people are fighting! Jesus, this is like *Fight Club*!" *[laughter]* But by the end of the night I had made my way to the pit and started doing some nu metal moshing in my Limp Bizkit t-shirt. It was all bands like xCANAANx and Thirty Seconds Until Armageddon (obviously they're not from Kent), and November Coming Fire. I still have a soft spot for those bands but obviously if I was to see a band like that now I'd probably be like "Oh my gosh....This is intense!" It went from that to—as John said—doing some bands in Kent, putting some gigs on, and I went down a similar track to everyone else, via screamo and all that sort of stuff.

MRR: With two couples in the band, are you more Abba, Fleetwood Mac, or neither?
All: *Abba*!
John: I'm a Fleetwood Mac fan but from what I understand there was a lot of cocaine and misery in the band. Even though there was eventually some misery in Abba, I feel there was some joy at some point.
Oli: Judging by our photos we have good symmetry, like the name Abba, and how they look as well. Whereas

Fleetwood Mac are a hot mess, aren't they?
Fran: We're pretty wholesome.
John: Yeah, no cocaine up the bum, Stevie Nicks sort of stuff.

MRR: Stevie Nicks invented that shit! Are there any musical influences which formulated your style? I detect some Gauze. I don't know about you, was that intentional?
Ellie: Actually it's funny that you say that. Not that I was trying to emulate Gauze (I wouldn't have known how), but I was listening to a lot of their records when we started. I don't think there was really a consensus about the kinds of things we wanted to do—except perhaps I knew for example that I didn't want to do a tough guy hardcore band. I wanted to do something that was a bit of a different sound. People often compare us to Rudimentary Peni (this probably came from how we initially described our influences when we were just starting). It's not really accurate, but I think it is in the sense that we're not trying to do the macho thing. And we're not bothered about retaining hardcore tropes in a way—we do other stuff as well.
Oli: Yeah, it wasn't even necessarily setting out to be a *hardcore* kind of band, but I think with our first few songs we liked the idea of writing tough bits. I know Ellie just said she didn't want to be in a tough guy hardcore band, but Fran has a really original or unique sounding voice, and we thought we would incorporate some tough parts with it. Looking back at it, it sounds a bit cheesy, and our stuff is definitely way better now.
Ellie: And we always wanted to do something fast.
John: Ellie always writes metal parts.
Ellie: Having never listened to metal in my life!
John: It sounds like Celtic Frost!
Oli: She's in constant denial.
Ellie: I'm learning to embrace it.
Oli: I think more and more we just try to make it sound as badass biker rock as possible.
Ellie: That's the ultimate goal. *[laughter]*
Oli: In the beginning we started with two covers. We tried to do a Rudimentary Peni one which didn't work so well, and we tried to do a Ramones one off *Leave Home* and we played that a couple of times.



John: We're the middle point between the Ramones' *Leave Home* and Rudimentary Peni.
Ellie: Hmm, not sure.

MRR: That's a good mix. What do you think Fran's lyrics are about?
John: Fran is quite open at practice. I can't remember if it's usually that we'll ask her what they are about, or if she'll offer it up—but we do talk about the lyrics quite a lot. I can think of one specific example where we discussed an idea and decided to change it. It was something that in the moment annoyed us and we wanted to talk about it, but on reflection there were more things we wanted to say that aren't as specific. That sounds really cryptic, and you're literally never going to get the story out of us.
Fran: That's a total "U ok hun?"
Ellie: I would say that for me a lot of what Fran does is about gender politics and everyday life. That's great—I love that. I would say that one of the things we're reacting against in a way is overly lofty lyrics that are about like, fucking hell, *the ether* or *death* or something. A lot of it is about the grit of everyday life, really.

MRR: I love some of the lyrics, especially in the song "Jeremy Kyle." Could you tell us about some of the things you sing about, or any particular songs?
Fran: "Jeremy Kyle" is an absurdist story, I suppose. It's based on a true story I read in the newspaper about how Jeremy Kyle went to film in Magaluf, and ended up getting pepper-sprayed. *[laughter]* I thought it was amazing, because it's a fun story but also it's to do with that snobbery of people like him who are voyeuristic, looking at people just trying to be themselves. He preys on people and is a horrid human being, so I enjoyed the karmic retribution of him being pepper-sprayed. I can't remember if we were having trouble with the vocal pattern for that song but we thought it would sit really nicely just having me speaking over it rather than any structured thing. It gave me free rein to go on this wild story, putting me as the person who has pepper-sprayed Jeremy Kyle in the face. It feels pretty powerful talking about it—but I now believe that it was actually me who did it! It's quite unusual in terms of what I say in the rest of the songs which is, as Ellie said, about the grit of everyday life, micro-aggressions, and how that is fucking draining. I think in my writing in the past I don't really like to waffle, I like to get straight to the point—and it's quite cathartic to write about that stuff.
John: For our international readers, Jeremy Kyle is by his own admission an ex-weed addict, who hosts a talk show. You can watch it in the UK and probably on the internet, where he basically just shouts at unfortunate people and generally lords it over them.
Ellie: It's a more exploitative version of the Jerry Springer show.
John: If you think we're snobs, this guy is king snob and not in a good way.

Oli: If anyone can recall a mid-1990s talk show where Marilyn Manson is interviewed and quite famously chastised by the audience and the presenter, it's a bit like that. It's really horrible.

MRR: Are your lyrics relevant to the current political climate then?
Ellie: Yes! Because increasingly identity politics are being regarded as reductionist categories, and are being co-opted to bolster authoritative or authoritarian political regimes, whereas what we're doing is actually about the business and politics of everyday living, and thinking about that critically. I think that stuff has never been more important than now.

MRR: And what are your main influences outside of music?
Ellie: Well, three of us are vegan—that's one thing. We like to eat together a lot. I would say we're all feminists and / or allies, or however you like to say it. We're very much wanting to be allies in lots of ways—
John: And we're open to learning about ways of living or being that we are not ourselves—
Ellie: And we all fall on the side of the general pussification of punk. We're all weaklings or pussies or nerds from the geekosphere in some way! *[laughter]*

MRR: Linking to that then, what's your favorite tabletop game?
Oli: We recently got into *Settlers of Catan*—anyone reading that will probably be like: "fucking *n00bs*!" Obviously that is ground zero of board games...
John: We like playing *Coup*!
Ellie: Yes, we like the futuristic fashions of *Coup*'s illustrations. We also play card games together.
Oli: We played a bit of *Love Letter* recently.
Ellie: And we play *Mario Kart* together a lot.
John: That's not a tabletop game...
Ellie: But stretching the answers a bit...And I want to say, for the record, when we had a *Mario Kart* tournament Fran won. John was angry.
John: I was not angry!
Ellie: He was upset and disappointed.
John: That's true.

MRR: What's going on musically that's exciting in London at the moment?
Oli: There's a really cool tape label—soon to be, maybe, vinyl label—called Nervous Energy. Rory and Camille are releasing all this kind of crazy, different stuff. It's mainly stuff by them, but is also very wide ranging and has brought a different element to the London punk scene to do with found object noise and other types of things. It's nice to see people getting into something that isn't around the same few bands that all have guitars and perhaps similar riffs. So I'm excited about that.
John: My favorite London band at the moment is Butcher in the Fog, which is like psychedelic Motörhead. Another band I'm in played a show with them, and I was beaming the whole way through—it's great.
Fran: I've been living under a rock for the last half a year, but when I saw Pinkgrip play I thought they were amazing.
Ellie: I'm always feeling sustained and leeching off—but also in some ways perhaps feeding back into—the energy of lots of women making music in London which is awesome. That goes back quite a few years now, and there's a really solid culture here. Bands I can think of right now like Woolf, Shopping, Es, Nekra, Child's Pose, the Worms, Big Joanie, Sarcasm, Score, Efialtis, and a

couple of years ago there was Frau of course. There are many more that I'm forgetting.
John: And not only women; non-men generally.
Oli: There's quite a cool band with lots of young people from Brighton called Vile Spirit. I'm sure by the time this will get printed everyone will have heard of them.

MRR: How about outside of London, where do you like to play?
John: We love Sheffield! We've always had a nice time there. Everyone seems very receptive to bands coming from outside.
Fran: We're big in Bournemouth.
John: We had a very weird night in Bournemouth involving a racist chip shop but then had the best night ever in a gay bar with our friends Moloch—shout out to Does Your Mother Know.

MRR: What was your last musical purchase?
John: On Oli's recommendation, I bought John Coltrane's *Live at Birdland*. I don't know much about jazz but it's been very much enjoyed.
Ellie: Off the top of my head, something like Kate Bush's *Lionheart*.
Oli: From the brilliant Tome Records in DIY Space for London—from one of the owners of Tome, who always buys excellent jazz records—I got Max Roach Quartet *Live at the Jazz Workshop*. And also a Lee "Scratch" Perry album, purely based on the album cover, which has a big skeleton smoking a joint whilst sitting on a Bible. It's called *Battle of Armagideon*. It's kind of crap, there are a couple of bangers, but it's mainly for the record cover. Please, if you haven't seen that, Google an image of it, it's great.
Fran: I'm listening to a lot of George Michael, big time.
John: Yeah, after the documentary *Freedom* came out, which is not an amazing movie, but there are a couple of bits where George Michael is discussing his lyrics. I feel like it covered a lot of stuff that got glossed over; for example, he talks about how much he loved his partner who was a gay man who died from AIDS. That wasn't considered to be something people wanted to hear about. I think it's fucking cool, and very moving.

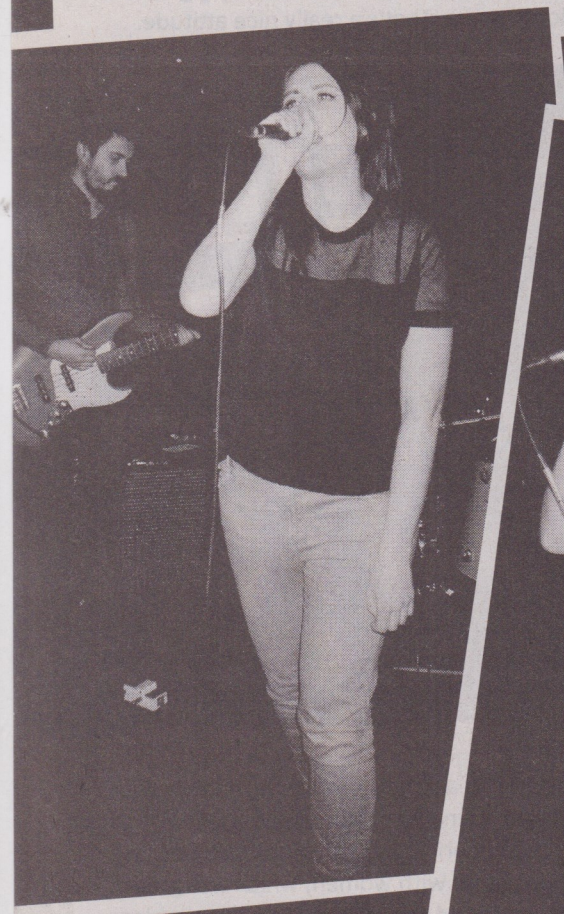
MRR: Last year you toured Europe, how was that experience, and did you take anything positive from it?
Ellie: Yes, we toured with Nachthexen, which you [Donna] are in, which is an excellent band. *[laughter]* We have a lot of personal, political, and musical affinities with them in weird ways. Even though we are very different bands, we are both, to some extent—and not to sound overly grandiose—interested in sort of throwing out expectations about what punk or hardcore should be. It's really awesome that we get to explore that together. The thing that really struck me about that tour was the generosity of the people we encountered. And also that in mainland Europe, in lots of places we went to, the community structure of DIY is so much stronger and so much more accessible. Because to some extent it's enabled by, for example, government subsidies and things like that. We don't have that here in the UK. We just had a fucking blast.
Oli: You might imagine with those kinds of structures, allowing more gigs to happen and stuff, that people would be a bit more selective, like how they are (and shamefully, how we are) in London. We are selective about the gigs we go to. But in Europe our experience is that people will come to see any gig that is happening at their local venue. That's a really nice attitude.

SNOB and NACHTHEXEN

Fran: It was cool, and I felt happy and bolstered going on tour with mostly women, including our friend Gabi who drove us. That was pretty amazing being in the majority, and I think maybe because of that we often got put on shows with women, which was great.
John: Although there was one sound guy who said he had a problem because he didn't have the correct microphone. Shout out to all sound workers who think they need a particular microphone to make women sound good! *[laughter]*
Oli: It's worth saying that if you are one of those sound people, this particular sound person at least had the decency to then apologize when we returned the following year. Rude, self-important sound people, it's not your last chance. *[laughter]*

MRR: Some of you are in other bands—do you want to explain that and what other roles you play? You kind of hinted at all playing different roles in Snob.
Ellie: The biggest band I'd done is one I sing / sang in, call Good Throb. We just played Static Shock festival here in Londc which was amazing. Sadly we are currently separated due to geography. It's a majority women band, and is amazing for me because it allowed me to be a gruesome horrible goblin woman and feel pretty great about it. I've carried some of that over into my guitar

I think. It was a very profound, life changing experience for me. In the past I did another band with Oli called Family Outing, and a few short lived things. I'm currently working on a new band where I sing and play guitar with members of Frau and Es, which is exciting.
Oli: I play in quite a few bands but they are all at different stages of being dormant or quite slow moving. I play drums in a band called Sarcasm with people from other bands in the London scene (like all of these bands). I play guitar in one with John called Body Butter which has been on ice for a long time. It was sadly tarred by a bad recording experience. I never thought a bad recording experience could have such a strong effect on a band, but it did. I also do one with Gabi, who as we just mentioned we went on tour with, which is called Savage Realm. I also do one called Child's Pose, which is hopefully going to have a record out on the Nervous Energy record label I mentioned earlier. I do a couple of metal and punk bands that don't have a name yet.
John: I play guitar in a band called Sky Lark, which I've been in for almost 10 years now—though you wouldn't be able to tell from our output and / or stature, but it's very good fun and I love the two guys I'm in that band with. I also do vocals in a fast hardcore band called Man Hands, which was fairly active in 2011–2012, but then everyone had a family and also needed to finish their degrees at university so we stopped doing that. We've started doing it again earlier in 2017 but then stopped again because people are having more children. But at some point we will release more music. Also Body Butter, which is the band that Oli mentioned. There's an unnamed and unformed embryonic emo band that I'm doing, and I'm also doing a space rock band with a friend of mine from university. I've recently cut down to having only one job at the moment so I've got loads of extra time—and I play loads of guitar now because it makes me happy.
Fran: I'm very loyal and completely committed to Snob—and I will be until the day I die.
John: If anyone wants to form a band with Fran, she's extremely good.
Oli: But she will say no!



MRR: You're all very good at the internet. What current YouTube clips should we be watching?
All: Oh my god...
John: "Speedboat fail!" It's a video of some rich Americans—I assume—on a speedboat. They hit some...I don't know the official term...Water turbulence? *[laughter]* And one of them gets knocked out.
Oli: They all eat shit to some degree, in a really amusing way.
Fran: The Instagram page "Animals Doing Things" is my favorite. Animals are sick and they often do silly things. Highly recommended.
Oli: The funniest thing I can think of is to type in "Robbie Fowler commentary." If you can understand a Scouse and / or Birmingham accent, it's really worth watching. Just be aware that in the video the two commentators are fans of the opposing football teams... Also "Scottish man shouting at a sheep" which he's stuck behind in a van. I could go on.
John: With the Robbie Fowler thing: we're an English band, and part of our English culture and heritage is football (or soccer), which we're supposed to love—except I really don't. But it's an example of why people love, and also do not love, football.
Ellie: We also love "drummer at the wrong gig."

MRR: Last question, how would you like to see the shape of punk to come?
John: Snob forever! *[laughter]* We've decided that we're in this for the fucking long-term, and we're going to be playing gigs forever. We're going to be like the Damned or someone. Sorry to the Damned, but you are past it, and maybe have been for a while. We're going to be at that level.

Oli: I love that it was meant to be an expansive answer about the scene and all John can think of is Snob... *[laughter]*
Ellie: I would like to see more genre bending and blurring, and more mixed bill festivals and gigs. I'm also really pleased to see there are amazing new initiatives happening like Decolonise Fest—I'd like to see more of that. Also, more women, more people of color, and many more queer people making music. I think there's a turning point where that's happening now, and I'm looking forward to seeing how that progresses.
John: Less white men making death metal would be extremely cool, I reckon.
Oli: If we're talking about metal, the same applies, as it does really for everything—more different people that aren't white men. And less people with chips on their shoulders. I feel like that's often a bit of a downer.
John: I get the impression that that's happening less. People that might have had a chip on their shoulder previously are getting a bit older and realizing that there are a lot of different people out there—and to maybe have less of a vibe about them that they think they're the cool shit. There are lots of people who are cool shit, or who aren't cool shit, and that's fine.
Oli: I think the idea is that we want more people being supportive of bands, even if it's not your music or whatever—that shouldn't necessarily be a reason not to support a local band or otherwise. Be a bit more positive.

MRR: One more actually, very quickly, if you were to choose one party banger tune, what would it be?
John: New Order – "Bizarre Love Triangle"
Fran: Sugababes – "Freak Like Me"
Ellie: Nachthexen – "State of Her"
Oli: Nachthexen – "Disco Creep"

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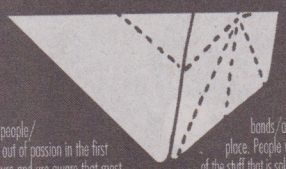

We like to meet people/ bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

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GET OUT OF MY WAY OR I MIGHT SHOVE

Near the beginning of **Here To Be Heard: The Story Of The Slits** guitarist Viv Albertine recalls seeing the Slits for the first time. She purposefully went to the show to see the Slits because she had already seen the other bands—the Clash, Buzzcocks and Subway Sect. The next day she called them up to see if they wanted to play together. They did. As a result, Albertine would replace the guitarist who played that show, Kate Korus. The thing that immediately comes to mind and sets the tone for the whole documentary is that there was an immediate spark. Somehow four women getting up on stage to play music ignited more women to play music. Gina Burch, soon to be of the Raincoats, was there. She recalls, "To my ears it was the most delicious sound. It unlocked something for me."

Although I am watching **Here To Be Heard: The Story Of The Slits** in 2018 and theoretically women are now accepted as musicians, the gender thing is always present. The Slits took it and ran with it. We are women and that defines us. That attitude still makes people uncomfortable. It's why we have the Republicans and need the Women's March.

The Slits were formed by drummer Palmolive. She recalls seeing Ari Up at a show and knowing she would be a great frontwoman even though she had never been in a band. The story of the Slits unfolds chronically in **Here To Be Heard: The Story Of The Slits**. Each band member and a few ancillary characters appear to tell the story of when they joined the band or got involved and to discuss what was happening at the time. The narrative is anchored by bass player Tessa Pollitt. Along with Up, Pollitt was the only original member to reunite the band in 2005. Pollitt has kept a scrap book from the beginning and carefully goes through it, reminiscing as she does.

Here To Be Heard: The Story Of The Slits is a superbly made documentary. There are interviews with every Slit except Ari Up. That seems strange when you think about it afterward. However, while watching she doesn't seem absent. There are archived interviews and live performances. Ari is an obvious presence, but having the other band members tell the story seems appropriate even if it was necessary. (slitsdoc.com)

L7 has a similar story to the Slits. They are also four women who met by chance and were inspired by each other to start a band. While the Slits flaunted their femininity, L7 quickly got sick of being characterized by it. They played as well as the boys, why couldn't people just get over the fact that they were women? There are some funny clips in **L7: Pretend We're Dead** where the band is being interviewed and the interviewers even mention that the band doesn't want to be asked about being women. I was getting annoyed for them. The band good-naturedly poked fun at the questions and the interviewers. It's not that L7 was ashamed of it. Their lyrics discussed it proudly. They were sick of being defined by it. They want to talk about the music.

L7 formed in Los Angeles in 1985 when Donita Sparks and Suzi Gardner were introduced by friends. They liked the music each other was making, decided to start a band and set out to find a bass player and drummer. Like most bands, they went through different members until they came upon the right ones. When they do they are off. As Exene Cervenka remarks in the film, "If it was easy to describe them, they wouldn't be great."

I have seen enough music documentaries to know that once a band starts justifying signing to a major label that things aren't going to end well. L7's break up is pretty heartbreaking. Gardner quits when she realizes she is forty and has nothing to show for it. It made me think of an article I recently read on NPR.org called "The Grunge Gold Rush." I was completely shocked to learn that Royal Trux was a band who managed to make their brief major label association a success. Apparently they still live off the money from it. If they could make it work, what did L7 do wrong?

L7: Pretend We're Dead handles the band's reunion the best way I have seen it portrayed yet. The last two minutes of the film are dedicated to it. That's it. There are no unnecessary extended live reunion performances or other unnecessary scenes added to fill out the film. (L7pretendweredead.com)

If **England Is Mine** were a fictional film instead of the factual story of Morrissey it would be more enjoyable. It is hard to not come to the story without preconceived notions of Morrissey. Either you like him or you don't. Your biases influence your viewing. I cannot believe that he could be as pretentious as he is portrayed in this film. An extremely shy, extremely conceited man is hard to grasp.

England Is Mine takes place in the few years before Morrissey starts playing with Johnny Marr and forming the Smiths. Morrissey is an office clerk who constantly writes in his journal and writes letters to rock magazines. Although the reason is not that obvious in the film, Morrissey has inspirations to be a singer. His friend Anji Hardie encourages him to answer ads seeking musicians at the local record store. He is too shy at first, but soon meets guitarist Billy Duffy who gets him to start singing. He also meets artist Linder Sterling who manages to get him somewhat out of his shell. He gets a taste of performing before both Duffy and Sterling move to London leaving Morrissey on his own again. The influence of women in Morrissey's life is the focus of **England Is Mine**. Hardie and Sterling help him to get into performing and his mother supports him through his bouts of depression and self-doubt. It is odd he didn't consider joining an all-female band.

England Is Mine propagates the myth that celebrities are different than regular people. As such they should be excused for acting selfishly. Morrissey may have talent, but perhaps he also had good role models and got lucky. Whatever the reason is, this version of Morrissey character's behavior is too easily accepted. Perhaps I am heaping more preconceptions of the actual Morrissey on to the film. If **England Is Mine** was a fictional film, it probably wouldn't even come to mind. (mvdvisual.com)

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Look for Me in the Whirlwind
by the New York 21 Defendants,
Matt Meyerand & dequi kioni-sadiki, Editors
PM Press, 2017
628 pages | $26.95

About a year ago, I visited the Oakland Museum's great *Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50* exhibit. I felt the showing was important in terms of re-writing the Panthers' past and emphasizing the ways that the Party's politics and community programs transformed peoples' lives in profound ways. The way I figured it, normal people go to the Oakland Museum. If those people chose to pay attention, the Black Panthers would suddenly become much more than the image of the gun-touting radical so commonplace in historical depictions. This is because the exhibit mostly highlighted the Party's community-oriented Survival Programs as the most important aspect of the Party's legacy. An aspect of the Party more palatable to liberal audiences. The Museum's interpretation, of course, isn't totally wrong. Survival Programs like the Free Breakfast Program, the Community Ambulance Program, and others were a big deal. Yet the Panthers were an ideologically diverse group, and that insurrectionary impulse of the gun-touting radical remained a significant tenet of many members' political thinking as well. One could argue that just focusing on the Party's Survival Programs really misses a lot.

Nowhere is this more apparent than the case of the New York 21, a group of Panthers brought up on conspiracy charges to blow up an NYPD precinct in 1969. The group was later acquitted on all charges in 1971, and the trial remains an important example of the federal government's efforts to dismantle the Party. But to me, maybe the most interesting aspect of the case was the time that it occurred. The acquittals emerged during a period of significant Party disunity between the factions of Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver. While Cleaver was pushing for guerrilla warfare to be waged against the U.S. government, Newton insisted on focusing on Survival Programs. In 1971, following their acquittal, the New York 21 published numerous communiqués pushing for armed struggle against the U.S. government. And, in response, Huey Newton promptly expelled them from the Party. Following their removal from the Black Panthers, key members of the New York 21 like Sundiata Acoli, Kuwasi Balagoon, and Sekou Odinga would join other New York former Panthers like Assata Shakur in founding the Black Liberation Army, a group of black militants covertly waging guerrilla war against the U.S. government throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Their story is an important one, yet one that remains seldom told, as it runs in the face of the community programs-centered notion of the Party.

With this historical gap in mind, *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, a new collection of writings by New York 21 defendants edited by Matt Meyer and dequi kioni-sadiki, seeks to restore the most militant wing of the Black Panther Party to its proper place amidst the pantheon of other important black leftist writers and thinkers. The book features the writings of Sundiata Acoli, the eighty year old revolutionary still incarcerated due to charges relating to an armed altercation with New Jersey State Troopers in 1973; Afeni Shakur, the New York 21 defendant and mother of Tupac Shakur; Kuwasi Balagoon; Jamal Joseph; and others. Yet, most prominently, the book features a re-pressing of the 1971 collective autobiography of the New York 21 also titled *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*. Learning this history from the perspective of activists themselves provides readers with a more intimate and personalized look at an important event in the history of the Black Panther Party.

Examining the stories of New York 21 defendants from the historical hindsight of 2017 reveals the diverse political developments of activists whose efforts would greatly impact the struggle for anti-capitalist black liberation throughout the 1970s and 1980s. For me, it's difficult to read these activists' stories outside their eventual excommunication from the Party and development of the Black Liberation Army, but I also think that frame makes their stories that much more interesting and important. In developing their inclination towards armed struggle, activists did not solely become politicized through exposure to poverty, street violence, and police brutality, but also through political activism in prisons and international anti-capitalist, guerrilla struggles. These are political factors often obscured in other studies of the Panthers' political development, yet *Look for Me in the Whirlwind* in many ways works to place these important influences at the forefront of its analysis.

Defendant Kwando Kinshasa writes of his politicization not taking place on the streets of Harlem, but on the streets of Guatemala City. During the early 1960s, Kinshasa was stationed as a marine in the Central American country. While there, he befriended the Marxist guerrillas of Movimiento Revolucionario-13, a group fighting the country's military dictatorship established in the aftermath of the CIA's overthrow of progressive Guatemalan leader Jacobo Arbenz. "Many of the tactics one would or could use in an urban guerrilla situation were already thoroughly planned in Guatemala, but some priority action was also planned: my Guatemalan friends explained to me that the only way the revolution could succeed would be to educate the masses first, in a period of two, five, ten years or so, to the necessity of armed revolution throughout all of the country," writes Kinshasa. In this sense, the New York 21 defendants' exposure to international struggles gave them a differing outlook on the Party's trajectory. For Kinshasa, the Survival Programs remained important educational and politicization projects. Yet the programs were not an end in and of themselves. For him, they had to lead somewhere.

The book also shows the struggle of the New York 21 as not solely limited to the city streets of Harlem and the Bronx, but also extending into the confines of New York City's jails. As much of the group remained unable to pay their extraordinarily high $100,000 bail, they took to organizing in the Queens Dentention Center, staging a prison rebellion there in 1970. Much like prison abolitionists today, New York 21 defendants viewed the prison system as an extension of the slave plantation, opposing the system on those grounds. *Look for Me in the Whirlwind* examines the prison as a space that extracts black labor for capitalist profit while severely limiting the movement and livelihood

BOOKS

of those imprisoned, simultaneously communicating the ways that activists have historically undermined the system's exploits. While the Panthers' prison abolition work is often overshadowed by the Party's anti-police organizing and community programs, Kuwasi Balagoon's telling of the 1970 Queens Detention Center uprising and other featured abolitionist writings show the undermining of the U.S. prison system to be an important aspect of the Black Panthers' and the emerging Black Liberation Army's political legacy.

The fact that many Panthers still remain imprisoned today on charges relating to their activism only further demonstrates the essential nature of this aspect of Panther politics. *Look for Me in the Whirlwind* and its telling of the New York 21's story presents an aspect of the Black Panthers' politics often overshadowed in their modern day reclaiming by more liberal-minded activists—their commitment to armed struggle. Writing like "We are madder than hell... We don't for sympathy. We ask for vengeance" might make liberals who have recently accepted the Panthers' place as an essential Civil Rights organization somewhat uncomfortable. Yet the notion of the Panthers as solely a group that served breakfast to children or set up health clinics is too simple. As *Look for Me in the Whirlwind* shows, these community-minded activists were armed insurrectionaries, hell-bent on overthrowing the government, as well. This is an essential part of the Panthers' legacy. The New York 21 represent the Panthers at their most ideologically left position and because of this, their story often remains obscured. *Look for Me in the Whirlwind* works to position the New York 21 as a story essential to the black freedom struggle. To place names like Kuwasi Balagoon, Sundiata Acoli, and Afeni Shakur alongside those of Huey Newton and Elaine Brown. While by the 1970s, the New York 21's politics greatly differed from that of the Oakland-based Party headquarters, the story of these activists helps to give readers a more complete picture of the Panthers' political legacy. Because of this, *Look for Me in the Whirlwind* remains essential reading for anyone seeking to understand both the Black Panthers in all their complexities and the emerging politics of the Black Liberation Army.

—Keith Riley

Emergent Strategy
by Adreinne Maree Brown
AK Press, 2017
280 pgs | $16.00

The experience of reading *Emergent Strategy* was a strange one. Never have I had a clearer sense that I was reading words that not only I, but we, as a collective people committed to social justice, had been waiting for. The book gives a name and a shape to something that had been floating around for a while, but remained elusive and nameless, although it was hitching to be identified, discussed and recognized.

It's a little like falling in love. Like finding the person you can talk to all through the night, because they get you, because you get excited working out the thorny thoughts and ideas you have been carrying around in your head, thinking you were the only with them in the whole universe. Adrienne Maree Brown admits that "it is possible that this whole book is about love," about the fact that "when we are engaged in acts of love, we humans are at our best and most resilient." But it is also about refusing to be beat down and jaded, to keep making the choice, every fucking morning, to get up and "move towards life," to trust people and to do the work necessary to bring the world we need into existence.

What the book offers is a compass, a model of thinking and operating. That compass is *Emergent Strategy*, a concept that springs from Octavia Butler's writing and envisioning. It is a societal model that is adaptive and relational. An array of "plans of action and organization that account for constant change, and rely on the strength of relationship for adaptation."

Emergent strategy seems to work in ripples. It is fractal. It borrows from nature. It is a way of navigating life, from your relationship to yourself, to your closest friends and / or romantic partners, to the organization you work in, to strangers in the street or whole systems of oppression.

Emergent Strategy is more about building than attacking. Brown asserts the importance of gut feelings, of being present in your own body, of understanding that nothing exists as an island. She reminds us that relationships are the core of everything, be it social justice organizations, punk bands, communal houses, chosen families or governments. That at each step, the organizations and projects we engage in are only as fruitful or conflict-filled and dysfunctional as the relationships of the people that are part of them. From this perspective, *how* something happens is more important than the end goal, or its size and scale. The model offered here is a stark departure from mainstream social justice work, which tends to reflect cultural norms tied to whiteness and maleness, to employ organizational tactics borrowed from the hierarchical structures of academia or the state, and to adopt abstract ideologies based on an hyper rational distance from lived experience. The book calls for a different kind of organizing, one that does not use statistics, figures, guilt, shame or fear as fuel for action. Brown warns us about bonding over scarcity, destruction, competition or gossip, and challenges us to do better. She reminds us that organizing is not only about overly rational thinking and perfection, but it is messy, emotional, relationship-dependant and meandric. In one of my favorite moments, she offers a protocol for haters, for people who have a much easier time taking down than building, which felt particularly relevant to certain facets of punk ideology. If your first instinct when you witness transformation, or people trying to figure shit out, is to critique and take down without supporting / helping / working toward a solution, then hush. Invest your energy in what you want to see grow.

Emergent Strategy is incredibly rich, delving deep into a wide variety of subjects, including but not limited to fractals and biological systems, literature and sci-fi, relationship to self, surviving trauma, romance, pleasure and sex, organizational structures, work dynamics, social justice facilitation, community accountability, and Adrienne Maree Brown's own struggles and glorious experiences of learning and thriving. She puts together what she has gathered and shares it with us, bringing along the voices of her close friends, mentors, and family members. The book is deeply generous and hopeful, born out of a need to look beyond the pain, destruction, and disappointment that can so easily engulf us, out of the firm belief that "this can't be all," and that we will get to where we need to go, if we move at the speed of trust and build movements and relationships that are deep and rooted.

—chiara galimberti

RECORDS

For review and radio play consideration, send two copies of vinyl or one copy of CD-only releases to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146, USA. We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore, etc.—no major labels or labels exclusively distributed by major-owned distros. Releases without vocals or drums will not be considered. Please include contact information and let us know where your band is from! No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork. All records reviewed are added to our archive, the largest collection of punk records in the world.

(AM) Allan McNaughton
(AU) Andrew Underwood
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(BP) Ben Paulsen
(CK) Carolyn Keddy
(CR) Camylle Reynolds
(CS) Chris Hubbard
(DB) Daniel Becker
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EW) Eli Wald
(FS) Fred Schrunk
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(GB) Graham Booth
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JD) Joan DeToro
(JR) Jason Ryan
(KK) Kenny Kaos
(LG) Layla Gibbon
(LP) Langford Poh
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MC) Mitch Cardwell
(MM) Marissa Magic
(PA) Pete Avery
(P$) Paul Argent
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(WN) Robert Collins

ABANDON CAUSE – "Power Failure" LP

Bleaah! Speedy and relentless but unmemorable riffs played over scummy but determined vocals, with an overall bleak feeling. Something about the drumming sounds like a piece of the beat is missing, but I can't tell what it is or if it's in my head. It kinda goes in one ear and out the other, but I could see myself feeling their live show if I were drunk, alone, and hating life enough on a weekday night. (DG)
(Comunidad del Fuego)

ACID BLOOD – "Dagger Eyes" EP

The first two of three songs from this Umeå band exist somewhere between sped-up NWOBHM self-indulgence and '90s / early 2000s bar crust. The third is over five minutes, and slows to a *Funhouse*-type sleaze pace, and I straight up can't decide whether or not I like it. On one hand, I picture a bunch of cornball "rock and RAWWL" types falling over themselves singing along to *"war times, war war times,"* and it has nothing to offer that the primary source material doesn't. But it is admittedly catchy. At the very least, I could see myself getting into their live show under perfect conditions. (DG)
(JanML / Maja von Lobeck)

ANTICHRIST DEMONCORE / GOOLAGOON – split EP

On the ANTICHRIST DEMONCORE-themed Ouija board that accompanies this record, it is stated that ACXDC have exclusive copyrights to the words "power" and "violence." Yeah fucking right. There are way better powerviolence bands all over the place. One of them is right on the other side of this record. GOOLAGOON is totally fucking legit! They nail fucked tempo changes all day long, their NO LESS style banshee back up vocals are far more deranged than ACXDC's, and most importantly they sound like a bunch of genuine fucking freaks! They even do a SCHOLASTIC DETH cover, in which the drummer does a spot on Max impression! GOOLAGOON saves this one for sure. No copyrights necessary. (BA)
(To Live A Lie)

THE BABES – "Greetings From London" CD

The hand-written note accompanying this disc claims that this trio is comprised of former members of BLITZ and TOTAL CHAOS, which left me a little perplexed. None of the original members of BLITZ are on this, and I'm presuming this must be the Yank TOTAL CHAOS, not the early '80s Brits that produced the seminal *There Are No Russians in Afghanistan* 7". "Someone's Gonna Die Tonight" this most definitely is not. What you do get is drums, bass, vocals, and er, bagpipes! But not in that Celtic folk punk way. There's a sort of angry driving punk rhythm section and vocals, along with single note squeals (and the occasional melody), which brings to mind actually the more out there lo-fi post-punk of the late '70s and early '80s more so than a DISORDER with bagpipes (even if they do cover "Rampton Song"). Definitely a bit odd, and probably more for fans of SWELL MAPS or ATV than CHAOS UK or the REAL MCKENZIES. (RK)
(self-released)

BABY SHAKES – "Turn It Up" CD

Some serious RAMONES worship, and rock'n'roll fluff, and I say that without irony or disdain. BABY SHAKES are unapologetic about their bubblegum punk. Along with their anthemic RAMONES melodies, their songs also pull from the ROMANTICS and the RUNAWAYS. Serious babes that can kick out some fine tunes. (CR)
(Lil' Chewy)

BARBED WIRE BRACES – "Brace Yourself" EP

Barbed wire suspenders? Ow! Makes a drunken night out hugging your mates a bit more interesting. This Canuck band does a wonderful mix of Oi! and old style hardcore reminiscent of TOXIC REASONS and NOTA. My favorites are "Never Again" and definitely "Insignificant" for the most interesting rhyming and enunciation of that word I've come across. You might pass this one up in the local record bin but *don't*! (RO)
(Bald Punk)

BB EYE – "Headcheese Heartthrob" LP

How could a band featuring Lumpy plus the genius Olivia Gibb be any less than incredible? I loved the 45, but wasn't sure if the band could continue in such a manner for the long player format. News report: this rules. Insane throwaway genius "Food Free Food" (by the DELINQUENTS) meets "Beer" (by UNIT 3 + VENUS) sound created in thee sickest style by Midwestern maniacs for punkers that win all the toys at arcade games. No one trick ponies, this record is an endless delight of varied aural wave concepts: hilarious, goofy and nasty in all the right proportions. I am obsessed, and if you are intrigued by any of the above, grab this ASAP! (LG)
(Fish)

BOYS ORDER – "Do The Wild Cat" LP

Japan's BOYS ORDER offer up energy driven punk'n'roll at breakneck speed. Pop punk on speed minus the teeth grinding. Songs are mostly sung in English with a smattering of lyrics in Japanese; singer Chihiro shouts her heart out, and it's fucking charming. Guitar is precise, needle like even, and shreds sunny riffs one after another. Catchy, straightforward rock'n'roll with a Japanese twist...and they take that shit seriously. (CR)
(Secret Mission)

BUNNYGRUNT – "My First Bells, 1993-1994" LP

This is a collection of fourteen songs from the first couple of years of BUNNYGRUNT's existence including EPs, compilation songs, etc. They played garage indie pop that could be all over the map at times (in terms of '90s indie rock at least). They go from sounding like HEAVENLY to trying to do a tune for teens from decades earlier to dance to at prom to trying to rip off SEBADOH. They were a big part of that sloppy, goofy, kind of cute indie scene at the time that included bands like TULLYCRAFT and VEHICLE FLIPS. It might not always sound great but at least it always sounds fun. The quality is pretty good despite the vague insert implying that there was some vinyl transfer involved. Liner notes are included that unfortunately don't provide too much of the technical history but act more like a platform for anecdotes. (PA)
(Silly Moo)

CF98 – "Story Makers" CD

Long-running melodic punk from Poland. Karolina's vocals are clearly the focus—full, powerful, and packing more melody in one song than most bands do in their careers—while the band delivers fourteen tracks of Warped Tour-worthy high energy punk that is way more appealing than it should be to this jaded 40-something reviewer. (WN)
(self-released)

C.H.E.W. / PENETRODE – "Strange New Universe" split EP

C.H.E.W. is indisputably one of the greatest new(ish) bands in hardcore, and this split cements that even further. Sounding like a feral version of DIE KREUZEN, they slobber their way through four manic hardcore tracks that sputter and spurt all over the place. PENETRODE in comparison are much tamer in their approach, with four tracks of relatively straightforward modern hardcore. Not bad by any means—they hold their own—but C.H.E.W. blow them and everyone else out of the water. (JD)

CHOKE CHAINS – "Android Sex Worker" LP

I'm sampling CHOKE CHAINS's wares and it's shaping up nicely. Should I whip myself for assuming the worst, what with BANTAM ROOSTER, CHINESE MILLIONAIRES, and NO BAILS personnel on board? Kinda! Recorded in Memphis, *Android Sex Worker* absorbs some of that burg's stank, helping to grease the gears of CC's ominous groove. This seems infinitely more indebted to JACK OBLIVIAN than whatever Motor City Whatever: sleazy drive, sexy, dangerous, tough and soulful. Aggression pokes in (see "Cairo Scholars") here and there, keepin' it punky enough for the louts out there, but rockers are probably the target demo and will be well served here. (MC)
(Hound Gawd!)

CLOSER – "All This Will Be" LP

This is pretty close to '90s writhe-around-on-the-floor-style of emotional hardcore. It gets hectic, then it comes down and there is a spoken word part, then it gets hectic again. Guitars get twinkly, then melodic, then heavy and chugging, then twinkly again. Vocals are desperately screamed, then talked out, then screamed again. Some of the songs do have a bit more of a pop element, as if a band member has pop-punk roots that they can't get rid of. (PA)
(Conditions / Lauren / Middle Man)

COLOR TV – "Paroxeteens / Night After Night"

Both sides of this record begin and end with what sounds like incidental analog synth music from an episode of the PBS show *Nova*. These act as nice bookends for what lies between: energetic, guitar-driven melodic punk in the vein of KBD-style punk and the DICKIES along with a garage feel of newer bands like FROZEN TEENS and MARKED MEN. The band plays tightly and the hooks slither out of nowhere to stick around in your head. Good shit! (GH)
(Neck Chop)

COUNT VASELINE – "Tales From The Megaplex" CD

Oddball singer-songwriter with a goofy sense of humor. Songs about JOHN CALE being cooler than LOU REED and a guy named Tom who spoke four languages but still died alone. This is charming in its dementedness. Played with a punk attitude and lack of self-consciousness. A weirdly fun record. (CK)
(Saustex)

DADAR – "Sick of Pasta" EP

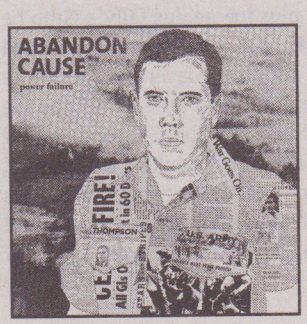
Blown-out and wild jangly garage punk from Italy. They have two different speeds: break-neck and screaming, or DEVO at 45 rpm. This is a super fun record; the four songs go by way too fast. Imagine if GUITAR WOLF was Italian and trying to play JAY REATARD songs. Muffled crazy punk at its most manic. Check it out. (FS)
(Spastic Fantastic)

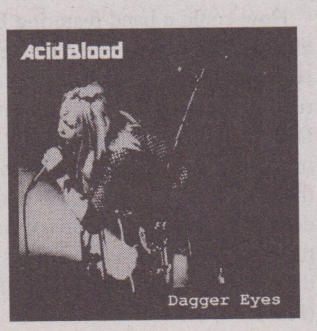
DAMN BROADS – "Looks Do Kill" CD

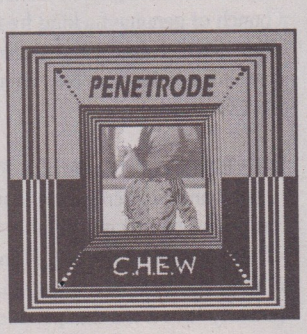
Plenty of nods to regional forebears (SUBMACHINE, the PIST) and excellent gang / crew backing vocals. Bridging the gap between clenched fist pogo punk and biting hardcore, this all-female trio delivers their goods with urgency, leaving all fucks at the door. This is their third disc—fans of beer, volume and sweat will want to take note. (WN)
(Vicious Mistress)

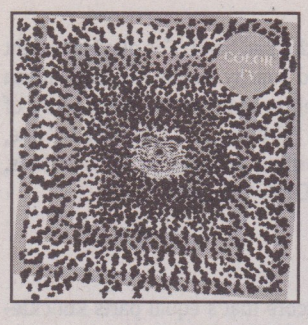
THE DEVILS – "Iron Butt" CD

Italy's the DEVILS may be the garage rock MOTÖRHEAD. This is noisy, trashy, bass-heavy rock that is played full-throttle with no excess frills. Despite the absence of a bassist, they sure sounds bassy. The









sound is so fabulously overblown. Wow and wow! (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

DIRECT HIT / PEARS – "Human Movement" split LP

Notorious genre-benders DIRECT HIT and live punk darlings PEARS both decided that they would give their full asses to their halves of this split. So many splits end up feeling like a whiney whiner whining, "we each had five songs that didn't fit anywhere, so we released them together so you'd give us money. *Buuuuuuuy iiiiittt pleeeeaaaasse.*" This split feels intentional and wonderful. It's like the warmth of holding hands and the cold of the concrete on your face when you fall in the mosh pit all at once. DIRECT HIT's side gives you some really gut-punching hardcore ("You Got What You Asked For" and "Nothing") and some pop punk so close to a synth-pop seizure that it's squee-inducingly cute ("Blood On Your Tongue" and "Open Your Mind"). PEARS' side is all the best attributes of LEFTÖVER CRACK and the LAWRENCE ARMS thrown into a meat grinder and sewn back together, ribbed for your pleasure. "Hey There, Begonia," mostly a tirade against gentrifiers, made me chuckle at the unexpected shade thrown at PLAIN WHITE T'S, but gave me a full hysterical laugh at the SYSTEM OF A DOWN reference. You're not going to go wrong with either of these two bands and putting them together is almost cheating. (RH)
(Fat Wreck)

DOWZER – "So Much For Silver Linings" CD

My pop punk jam of the season! From the Netherlands, this combo plays speedy pop punk with great riffs and great guy / girl vocal interplay. The song "Broken Record" is an instant pop punker classic. This reminds of the current BOMBPOPS and musically of early RED CITY RADIO. They do a good job of mixing up the tempo with some great drumming. A great pop punk band! (RL)
(Shield)

THE DROOGS – "Young Gun" CD

The DROOGS are a Los Angeles garage band that has been around since the early '70s. They claim to be Paisley Underground before there was a Paisley Underground—and sound like it. Polished and flowery rock tunes with soaring guitar solos and sincere vocals. Familiar without sounding too generic. (CK)
(Plug n Socket)

DYM – "Ray's Front Teeth" 12"

Super '90s post-hardcore, very much like JUNE OF 44. The songs are repetitive head nodders that rely heavily on dynamics. They can get heavy and screaming or dwell in the spoken vocal (by a person standing very far away) / meandering guitar world. The best part about it is that, like the early post-hardcore bands, this is not overly technical or perfectly played but works more on feel. It's a cool record and a grower. (PA)
(Barely Regal / Kingfisher Bluez / Strictly No Capital Letters / Time as a Color)

EVIL MR. SOD - "Still Alive And Well" CD

EVIL MR SOD is the solo project of the singer of the well known Canary Island band FUCKIN' FAMILY FACES?! Maybe you're more tuned into the vibrant Canary Island scene than me but that still doesn't make gold squirt out of a bag of dog shit. This is really hard to get through. You need to have a lot more grit in your well manicured beard to pull off this kind of thing. Acoustic country ballads, blues and a little rockabilly not unlike the solo stuff from EDDIE SPAGETTI of the SUPERSUCKERS. His song titles show a love for classic punk and new wave on tracks like "Night Of The Living Dead Boys," "Made In Japan," and "Smell Of Female" but this is like being trapped in some horrible European island bar with no ride home in sight. Help! (RO)
(Keep It A Secret)

EXEK – "Ahead of Two Thoughts" LP

EXEK plays post-punk that is not of the goth variety. Rather, think of dark, spacy post-punk that invokes the ambiance of SWELL MAPS, GLORIOUS DIN, AU PAIRS and WIRE all at the same time. Some of the more ambient and more electronic moments even bring FAD GADGET to mind. Sparse melodies and electronic ambiance are matched well with moments of driving and dance-able rhythms. The rhythm section on this LP is fucking great. The bass lines are driving, melodic and almost funk-influenced (think ESG) while the drums are reverbed as hell and really mesmerizing. This record was a pleasant surprise. If you enjoy the more experimental output of TOTAL CONTROL, you may really enjoy this record. (BP)
(W.25th)

FADEAWAYS – "Sick and Tired / Long Gone"

You've seen it before—Japanese guys in striped shirts playing garage punk. Yawn. This band has less to do with, and much less fire than, TEENGENERATE or the REGISTRATORS. Instead they stick to a much more traditional and ridged LYRES or COUNT BACKWURDS garage formula. This all makes for a none-too-interesting record, sadly. They're probably great live though. (RO)
(Secret Mission)

FATAL FIGURES – "YOU ARE MONSTER" LP

This is the second LP from this east coast band featuring members of bands like the BLOWTOPS. This record is a perfect combination of that band and some Amphetamine Reptile noise or even the more tuneful SONIC YOUTH or HONEYMOON KILLERS moments. They do a damn sweet RED CROSS cover too. (RO)
(Blak Skul)

FOX FACE – "Spoil + Destroy" CD

Gritty, distorted, and dark garage. FOX FACE offers up feminist punk that's brutally honest and best played loud. Melodies are simple and at times left me hungry for more powerful hooks to draw me in. The vocals are fervent and reminiscent of Jenny Angelillo of fellow Dirtnappers NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS. It's not a perfect album, but they sure as hell have my attention. (CR)
(Dirtnap)

FRAGMENT – "In the Dust" 12"

Canada's FRAGMENT offer up nine tracks of crasher crust that lean just a bit too heavily on the crasher side. The joy of bands like GLOOM and DECEIVING SOCIETY was that they buried some genuinely catchy tracks under the chaos and noise, something that FRAGMENT only offer occasionally throughout. The first three tracks are a bit of a noisy mess, but the A-side closer, "Fear," is a genuine toe-tapper, and the B-side picks up tremendously. By the time the final two tracks roll around, the band is firing on all cylinders. The stench-core-meets-crasher finale of "Final Stand" is absolutely killer! While there's a solid EP's worth of material here, I feel like FRAGMENT needs a bit more refinement to their sound and recording process. They didn't knock it out of the park this time, but there's potential here. (AU)
(Desolate / Rawmantic Disasters)

FUERZA BRUTA – "Verdugo" LP

What if you played UK Oi! that sounded like Mexican punk and made it all sound thick and heavy like later NAKED RAYGUN? I mean, that would be pretty cool, right? That's what these Chicago fools have done, and from the first laid back phaser lead to the monstrous crew vocals to the "maybe you've heard it before but you just don't often hear it this fuckin' good" riffs, FUERZA BRUTA lay waste to hordes of modern midpaced leather jacket come latelys. It's all extremely straightforward, and there are no surprises after the first track, just more killer tracks. (WN)
(Foreign Legion)

G.D.L.H. – "Gyrophares De Lahaine" CD

Devastatingly heavy sludge / hardcore from France. A slight stoner groove on a few tracks, but the band definitely shines when they hold back and just punish. (WN)
(Emergence)

GEE TEE – "Death Race" EP

I love living in an era when the kids are replicating the lo-fi collapsing DEVO worship of the early '80s! Here we have more "Killed By Devo" perfection that fans of CONEHEADS will enjoy / endure, from a one man band based in Australia (as far as I can tell). It's not unhinged insanity *à la* the SCREAMERS; it's throwaway dollar store consumer pop wave for our new plastic reality! I find this a delightful way to spend ten minutes. (LG)
(Neck Chop)

GUERILLA POUBELLE – "La Nausee" CD

For the last decade plus, Red Scare has been the imprimatur of quality. Turns out that GUERILLA POUBELLE are French political pop-punkers. Mix the anthemic pop-punk of a CRIMPSHINE with the lyrical sensibilities of PROPAGANDHI / WEAKERTHANS's John Samson, and well, what more can you ask, really. Makes me wish I'd kept up the ol schoolboy French, but I guess life is full of regrets. This here CD isn't one of them. (RK)
(Red Scare)

HAIRCUT – "Shutting Down" EP

Five direct hardcore jabs from this Richmond band. The playing is tight and striking and they've got a bright and punchy sound. Vocalist Juliana is done with the booze and drugs, as well as trying to "impress a jury of men." Some serious riffing, especially on "Gritona" and "Boys Club," like, POISON IDEA and TOTALITÄR level riffing. No need for solos or leads. For fans of CRIATURAS and EXIT ORDER. Great shit. (MA)
(Feel It)

HEAT – "End" EP

Monstrous! Vicious San Diego hardcore that's equal parts knuckle-dragging early '80s East Coast hardcore (think NEGATIVE FX or, even better, LAST RITES) and early '90s powerviolence (CROSSED OUT and INFEST exclusively). Ultra-negative, bleak lyrics delivered with bellowing outrage over primal riffs and a stripped-down, tight as fuck rhythm section. This is incredibly simple and equally incredibly catchy, somehow able to mine both of these well-worn hardcore tropes for something refreshingly unique. Masterful, hateful music for hateful times. (AU)
(Deranged)

HELLTHRASHER – LP

Terrifying grind metal out of Memphis, featuring the original guitar player from HIS HERO IS GONE. They don't really sound much like that band though. These guys sound less like a crusty guerrilla apocalypse, and more like flying full-blast into a heavy metal meat grinder with nothing but blackened hell waiting on the other side. Total blastbeat devastation! Metal freaks take note! This is your chance to renew your relationship with Satan! (BA)
(Blak Skul)

HIGHTOWER – "Club Dragon" CD

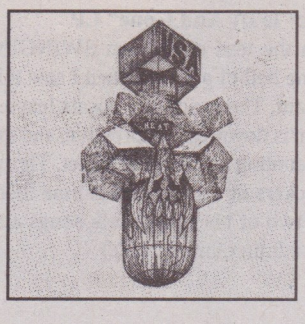
This is HIGHTOWER from France, not to be confused with other bands named HIGHTOWER. This was recorded in Los Angeles and it sounds pretty '90s emo and pop punk. It is done well but this does sound just like TAKING BACK SUNDAY with a dash of THURSDAY. Decent and well produced just not terribly original. (RL)
(Krod)

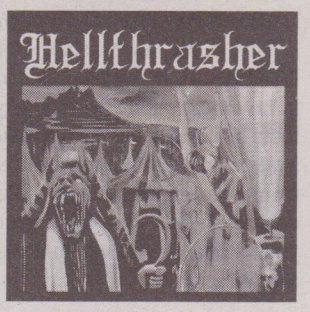
HIRS COLLECTIVE – "How To Stop Street Harassment" flexi

Don't dismiss the HIRS COLLECTIVE as a message without a delivery method, because *How To Stop Street Harassment* is every bit sonically relentless as it is ideologically uncompromising. Proud, forceful femme power violence that hits like a fist to the face...It's not pretty, and it takes no shit. Lightning fast fasts, bomb heavy slows, and they fire from track to track almost as fast as they fly between riffs. Vocals weighing on your ears as much as the lyrics weigh on your conscience. Highly recommended. (WN)
(Get Better)

HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE – "Mental Hoop" LP

Densely woven nightmare-scape sounds that seem more *punk* than on previous recordings. There's a paranoid RUDIMETARY PENI





relentlessness that has almost totally replaced the Kraut / psych orientations; in short, this sounds like a psychotic, damaged hardcore LP. There are a couple of songs that have a MOULD / SAGE guitar psychedelica feel, but the majority of the LP feels like a blast of wound-up, guitar-based paranoia. The totality of sound that is typical of this group is in full effect; I can imagine this being very effective as a soundtrack on a commute to a job you hate. (LG)
(Iron Lung)

HOWLING WOLVES – LP

Amazing side-of-a-van worthy cover art on a pretty mediocre record. These German bros are gunning for the punkers with bongs genre of ANS, the SHRINE or ANNIHILATION TIME. There is way too much gloss and not enough grit on this release. There are some great chuggy moshing CRUMBSUCKERS moments in songs like "Awake" but the endless overdramatic wanking interludes and weak vocals relegate this band to a nice t-shirt at best. (RO)
(JanML / Maja von Lobeck)

HÜSKER DÜ – "Savage Young Dü" 4xLP + "Extra Circus" EP

One of punk rock's finest gets the exhaustive Numero archival treatment on this deluxe box set, which covers the Twin Cities trio's earliest output up until they signed with SST. While good portion of the material here may already be known to die-hard DÜ-heads, *Savage Young Dü* boasts nearly 50 recordings never officially released before. Sifting through the various demos, alternate studio takes and live versions, it's interesting to see the stylistic progression—from sharp, melodic punk rock to the *Statues / Amusement*-era stab at angular post-punk and the amphetamine-fueled blur of the *Land Speed Record* period—before the band first really blossomed on *In a Free Land* and *Everything Falls Apart* (both included here in their entirety). Amazingly, at that point the HÜSKERS were just getting started. Complete with a 108-page hardcover book(!), this collection is overwhelming and no doubt aimed at the completist rather than casual fan. My real complaint, though, is that the most interesting tracks—five crucial outtakes from the *Metal Circus* sessions—are only available on vinyl as a bonus 7" that came if you pre-ordered the release directly from the label. It would be nice to see those turn up again someday on a release collecting odds and ends from the SST years, but I won't hold my breath... (CS)
(Numero Group)

ISOTOPE SOAP – "The WOW! Signal" EP

Four songs of un-mellow and unhinged synthpunk from Sweden. The A-side features three songs clattering through a kind of PAUL ROESSLER / LOST SOUNDS dimension, landing on planet Earth filtered through layer after layer of warbly filters and vocal modulation. Weird but thankfully not trying too hard to be; within the jumble of noise here you can tell that *someone* must be trying to write a song. Imagine the UNITS as interpreted by Scandinavian teens who'd seen their picture somewhere without having heard them. The B side flips some B-movie theme synth pads over an electro backbeat, dashed with some crackling stabs of noise to keep the listener on their toes. (EW)
(Levande Begravd)

ITANSHA – "2012 Demo" EP

This was one of my year-end top ten picks back when it came out, and it's only gotten better with time! The only solo release by Daiki Kusuhara (MÖRPHEME, VACCUUM, CRIME DESIRE, HEAT), this sounds completely unlike any of his bands. Primarily influenced by the early ADK Records catalog, this is straightforward, extremely dark punk with touches of hardcore *à la* ABURADAKO, MASTURBATION and DISARRAY, highlighted by demented melodic guitar leads and impassioned vocals. Simple bass lines and chaotic drumming only add to the early '80s atmosphere of the record, which is further emphasized by the reverb-heavy lo-fi recording. The super-basic packaging offers all the necessary information (lyrics in Japanese and English, original art) while maintaining the blown-out DIY vibe. This was fucking great in 2012 and it's just as fucking great now. (AU)
(Warthog Speak)

JACKSON POLITICK – "Paste V.1" LP

Decorum compels me to mention that Jackson's really Jordan: Andy, that is—he of REPTOIDS, the WORLD and BEATNIKS notoriety. In his operating as this newest character, Politick jabs across all manner of *moderne* punk crannies, excreting a homemade mad scientist tape-hiss goop across the entire affair. The air of immediate expression coupled with a complete lack of slouch shrug-off shite really drives home just how adept this guy is a generating highly compelling ear-worms. A varied and hyper-fun collection of DIY punk circa 2018. Wonderful! (MC)
(Neck Chop)

KBO! – "Perspektiva 1982–1989" LP

KBO! formed in Yugoslavia in the early 1980s and this LP captures their earliest recordings from demos, splits and previously unreleased recordings. As a fan of their first two LPs, I was looking forward to hearing this collection of earlier recordings and I was not disappointed! KBO! plays fast, melodic, and at times, somber punk. The speed and melody of some of these songs is similar to FUNERAL ORATION while some of the darker melodies brings ARMIA or later CHAOS Z to mind. Other similarities can be drawn to other YU punk bands such as GOLA JAJA or the earlier recordings of PARAF. I love how there are several moments in this record that jump from a somber and dark mood directly to a fast song that you can pogo to! KBO! does a wonderful job at maintaining energy and simplicity while also incorporating more thoughtful and somber moments. Some of the more almost folk-influenced guitar almost feels reminiscent of the amazing YANKA DYAGILEVA. Recommended. (BP)
(No Plan)

KNOWSO – "Look At The Chart" LP

Deviant full-throttle art punk noise from that hotbed of warped dementedness, Cleveland, OH. Propulsive drumming goads the flatulent bass and whisks guitars into action, undercutting vocals that sound like a couple of roommates having an argument in the apartment next door. It's no surprise that the members of KNOWSO could only maintain this level of intensity for five songs; the reverse side of the record is blank. (AM)
(Neck Chop)

DARIUS KOSKI – "What Was Once Is By And Gone" LP

This is the newest solo effort from the lead dude from SWINGIN' UTTERS. To be honest, I belted out one hell of a groan when I saw this in my stack, but it's surprisingly pleasant. The lyrics and vocals leave a lot to be desired, but the instrumentation is downright impressive, and the straight up instrumentals are dreamy, haunting and fucking sweet. Throw them beer-bellied blue-eyed-bluesy rockers in the can and gimme them dreamy soundscapes and even one or two of his simple folk songs and you've bought yourself an unexpected admirer, mister. (DZ)
(Fat Wreck)

THE LAST GANG – "Sing For Your Supper / Turn The Record Over"

This is a two-song teaser for the upcoming full length from the newest members of the Fat Wreck family. Brenna Red's vocals and guitar harkens back to a *Sing Sing Death House*-era DISTILLERS. Bring out the fist pumps and the shouting and the like. (RH)
(Fat Wreck)

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Mind Parasites" LP

Trust me when I say that I do not use this term lightly, but LEBENDEN TOTEN are geniuses. Unlike them, I do not worship at the altar of CONFUSE or DISORDER. I can't even tell you any songs by either band. I don't care. I've been following this band for over ten years now and they just keep getting better, honing their art (yes, *art*) and evolving into a beast that is more incisive and destructive over time. The guitar still sounds like a focused wash of complete treble insanity while the bass seems to carry the tune of the song. The drums fucking pummel everything around them while Chanel sails over everything with a commanding, desperate wail that is all her own. Fuck, this record is incredible. There are some moments of slipping into goth and darkwave underneath the layers of noise, but LEBENDEN TOTEN makes all of these sounds bend to their will rather than following the script. Entirely destructive and satisfying, as always. (GH)
(Overthrow / self-released)

LEMURIA – "Recreational Hate" CD

This latest release from LEMURIA is more indie rock and pop—not that they were ever big with the SCREECHING WEASEL snotty punk crowd. Almost '80s college rock, this varies between the sounds of the BLAKE BABIES, VAMPIRE WEEKEND, and BELLE AND SEBASTIAN. Good for what it is. (RL)
(Asian Man)

THE LILLINGTONS – "Stella Sapiente" CD

The first full length effort from these pop punk stalwarts in over a decade, and it's a beauty. Twenty years ago, they released what is one of the classics of the genre—*Death By Television*—and this is perhaps even better. All the hallmarks of their sound are here: the driving, chiming power pop, but it's enhanced and embellished by a healthy dose of late '70s / early '80s heavy rock / metal (think IRON MAIDEN / THIN LIZZY) and similar period guitar new wave (*à la* the CURE's first couple of records). Fucking hell, this is great! (RK)
(Fat Wreck)

LION'S SHARE – "Wasted Moments" EP

LION'S SHARE from Newfoundland play gruff, pissed, Oi!-influenced punk. This shit is catchy and well done. LION'S SHARE doesn't appear to be attempting to re-invent the wheel (which if fine with me) but they also incorporate a lot of great guitar and rhythm work that kept me interested the whole time. The melody and guitar work of songs like "Wasted Moments" and "Streets of Rage" brings STIFF LITTLE FINGERS to mind while more straightforward Oi! moments such as "Mental Break" are comparable to RIXE. Throughout the record, many different elements also remind me of CRIMINAL DAMAGE. If any of the previously mentioned bands are up your alley, check out this record and shine your boots while listening to it! (BP)
(Warthog Speak)

LIVING EYES – "Modern Living" LP

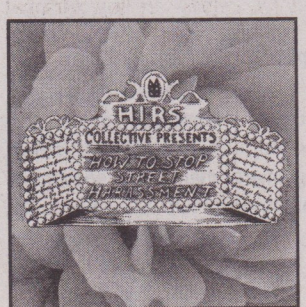
Supported by a backbone of garage-style rock'n'roll, LIVING EYES delivers an entire LP of big, exciting tracks with tons of variety and surprises. The label proposes that this band "is about as smart as it is stupid," and it's too accurate not to repeat here. This is what music sounds like when it's made by garage rockers who are wildly talented and not just playing in a band so they can get into the room where the free coke is. The production is incredibly full sounding, and every track is totally engaging. Not completely unlike what the SPITS do, only this time with more guitar shredding and less casual misogyny. (HB)
(ANTI FADE / Neck Chop)

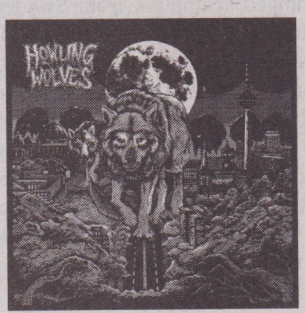
LOS KIKES – "Hayehoodonim" LP

LOS KIKES is a sick band from Israel. I first saw them play thirteen years ago at a generator show in an underground tunnel in the middle of Tel Aviv. Since then, I've learned to appreciate the total nihilism that is LOS KIKES, or HAYEHOODONIM in Hebrew. This album was initially recorded in 2004 by the late, great Israeli garage / surf musician Charlie Megira. If you're looking for a creepy as fuck album that combines noise, surf, death metal, and of course hardcore punk, this is it! This record is all over the place, but in such a perfect way. Imagine if Link Wray and GG Allin had a baby, and that baby was addicted to crack and DRI. Comes with a big poster and a booklet with art and lyrics. (DB)
(Sshaking / Twintoe)

LOS KIKES – "Lottery" EP

Garage / skate rock from Israel that sounds like it could be some forgotten nardcore band's first demo. This is pretty basic, but it shreds nonetheless. The last song on the record is some kind of black metal / skate rock amalgamation, which believe it or not, is actually sick. My only issue with this record is that the packaging is hella confusing. They made a unique logo for each song and put them on the front of the sleeve so it looks like a compilation. Then they buried their name





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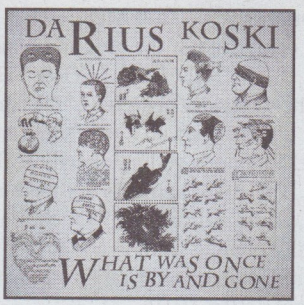


somewhere on the back. What the fuck? If you can find this and figure out what the hell it is, it's worth a spin. (BA)
(Sshaking)

LOST WORLD – "Posthumanism" EP

I cannot believe that these Germans realized, in the middle of the 1990s, that the name LOST WORLD would be so apt for their 7" comp of odds and sods some 17 years later. These LOST WORLD songs come to use from a liminal moment in punk. They walk the line between d-beat-kissing crust *à la* DETESTATION and emo pop punk *à la* JAWBREAKER. Oh, and they straight jacked the melody to "Cherub Rock" on one track. If you like melodic anarcho-punk, the songs on this comp from May of '97 will give you the life that you need. Same if you yearn for some light and bouncy European crust with the tracks from June of '98. (LP)
(Kink)

MARTIN – "Slaughter Beach" LP

19-year-old me would be spazzing out to this band. Middle America pop-punk that sounds like a more emo MAX LEVINE ENSEMBLE. Super fast, upbeat, heartfelt basement pop music. Fun music, all the way. Are you a fan of REGGIE AND THE FULL EFFECT? Yes?!? Than you should absolutely check out this band. It is a non-stop pogo fest over here. (FS)
(Square of Opposition)

MISANTHROPIC CHARITY – "My Friend" EP

To properly experience this disc one must read through Adam's (the No Plan label guy) story in the foldout sleeve. Despite the incredible pedigree of the band (ex-ENOLA GAY and ELECTRIC DEADS, pre-PRESIDENT FETCH), the music didn't totally grab me, but his story did. I'm a record nerd know-it-all snob living in California with internet access, but Adam was an eager kid living in former Yugoslavia in the '80s trying to connect with the punk network of friends. As a result of writing letters to random bands mentioned in other fanzines, he landed these three tracks on a tape. Here they are 30 years later on wax, accompanied by a layout including nice photos and flyers to put it all in context. "My Friend" is a pretty complex, drawn-out rocky tune that doesn't quite hit the spot. "Message" is the catchiest I think, and actually reminds me more of UK anarcho bands like LOST CHERREES and ICON AD, while "New Day" keeps up the bouncy pace, carried by Bibi's signature urgent vocal style and raspy backup gang-dude shouts. Worthy document of the Danish punk scene, but *pleeease*—will somebody unearth some unheard KALASHNIKOV recordings? (MA)
(No Plan)

MISS DESTINY – "Ice Queen / Randy"

I've been waiting forever for some new MISS DESTINY tunes. The wait was worth it. Two great garage punk songs filled with tough girl swagger. I love them both. (CK)
(Shipping Steel)

MONDO GECKO – "Sick, Twisted, Psycho, Deranged" LP

Straight ahead fastcore thrashing out of Israel. What a band that's named after a mutant lizard skater dude should sound like. Fucking full blast hardcore shredding with no time to breathe! There's youth crew influences here, like the shouted vocals and the momentary pauses, but the tempo goes all the way up to powerviolence territory. Pick it up if you're into circle pits, kick flips, and middle fingers. (BA)
(Crapoulet / Ffud / Stanley Electronics / Twintoe)

MØRDER – LP

Galloping apocalyptic melancholy death crust from Germany. Proficiently intense drumming, low-end guitars which tie things together, weaving within and out of a thick fabricated bass guitar. This is quality neo-crust played humbly and stoically. Channeling the intensity of contemporaries NO STATIK, leaning more toward the epic nature of TRAGEDY, less aggressive than EBOLA but with as much unrequited fire on every track. Think DAMAD or 13. The finale track "Dressed In Pain" is completely obliterating with anger. Brutalist off-kilter cover art. Very impressive. (JR)
(Cardiophonic / JanML / Maja von Lobeck)

NEGAZIONE – "Tutti Pazzi" EP

No Plan is doing the Lord's work, that's for fucking sure. They've been offering up a steady stream of hard-to-find Italian hardcore classics for years, and this is a crown jewel of that project. NEGAZIONE are indisputably one of the most important hardcore bands of all time, and this is their best solo record. Frantic, completely insane sounding vocals define the record, but the band were innovative as well, equally adept at a mid-tempo stomp as an all-out hardcore attack. Here, guitarist Roby cranks out riff after effortless-seeming riff with a tone that's simultaneously clean as fuck and heavy as hell. The title track is the most well-known of the bunch, but the STOOGES-influenced grind of "Niente" and the blazing "La Mia Mente" are just as classic. Fuck, every cut is essential. Move yer ass punk, this record isn't gonna be around forever. (AU)
(No Plan)

NIGHT PEOPLE – "More Than Rust" EP

Totally fucking fun, synth heavy, and dark post-punk. Yes. Fun *and* dark. I want to cite the CURE and PIL as obvious influences, but I don't want to imply this is some sad, mopey, blacklight rock, because this is fucking killer! Put them right after NORTHERN LIBERTIES on your mixtape. Anxious to hear a full length. (DZ)
(Deranged)

NIKE – "Flea Bytes" EP

Let's say they're named for the Greek goddess of victory, I guess? Otherwise this band is even more lawyer-bait than RANK/XEROX or KLEENEX. Minimal, simplistic post-punk, somewhat arch in tone—the BUZZCOCKS of *Spiral Scratch* era and DESPERATE BICYCLES are the first reference points that spring to mind. I particularly enjoyed "Separate Speeds" for its weirdness. (AM)
(Pocket Producer)

OPEN CITY – "City Of Ash / A Condition Worth A Mention"

OPEN CITY is a new supergroup comprised of the guts and bones of WORRIERS, PAINT IT BLACK, LIFETIME, TED LEO & THE PHARMACISTS, and many more. The streetwise pedigree of the band shows that they know what to do, but it's how they do it over these two tracks that is worth looking at. Rachel Rubino is yelling directly at the listener, and the listener better listen. The guitar and bass are the kind that makes your knees a little shaky, and the drums will attack those knees and push you over. The intensity coming from every corner of this band is so refined, doubled-filtered, and served straight up that I imagine ingesting it live may cause inebriation. (RH)
(Open City)

ORÄNGÄTTÄNG – "The Beast Bites Back" LP

First off, I just want to say the art on this record is completely ridiculous: a rendering of a three-headed, multi-armed orangutan swinging from a vine while brandishing a machine gun, machete, a chainsaw, a bat and a bottle of whiskey. The band plays hardcore that doesn't really match how ridiculous the cover would make them out to be. Lots of palm muting and some riffs that sit right on the border of metal, but never cross over the line. Aggressive vocals about getting drunk, body image, the utter bullshit state of the world and feeling out of place in it are what rounds it all out. Not bad at all. (GH)
(Argh, Fuck, Kill / Forest / Front Core / Keine Ahnung / Pest & Cholera / Unsere Eltern Sind Geschwister)

PANICBURG CITY – 12"

Hamburg-based four-piece indie-influenced punk rock. The songs on this album are mostly mid-tempo, moody, and melodic. The catchy hooks and driving guitars of these four songs turned me into a new fan. For fans of HUSKER DÜ. (DB)
(JanML / Maja von Lobeck)

PLASTIC – LP

This debut LP from Chicago's PLASTIC has some transcendent moments very early on. The first track is a head-turning soundscape with deeply antagonistic vocals panned back and forth in stereo and a synth sounding like a rubber band plucked next to your ear, or maybe a sample from the last 30 minutes of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. As a band with a minimal lineup (which is to say there's a synthesizer but no guitar player), their peaks are when the sparse set of elements play off each other. For instance, at the beginning of "The Garden" when the electronics set the pace for the bass and drums, when they abandon tempo to end a song like "731" with a falling-down-the-stairs drum break, followed by the sound of a dumpstered PC having its audio card smashed with a hammer. Like a hardcore record, it reaches its best moments when it comes closest to falling apart. The more straightforward tunes here are a little underwhelming in comparison, but if you dig ruminations on boredom, alienation, and paranoia decanted over throbbing synth tones, plodding drums, and BAUHAUS / PART 1-esque basslines, then you may dig. (EW)
(Lumpy)

PROGRAM – "Obliteration Of The Self" EP

Uuuuuffffff–fist pounding kång from the Texas / Tamaulipas border. Ruthless and massive sounds for the first burst, but it's the stomp of "Endless Darkness" that really seals the deal with a modern modern squirmy pulse before PROGRAM launches back into their ruthless version of the chillest D-beat on earth. The band nods to TOTALITÄR and DISCLOSE, but I'm more inclined to reference SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS and SPAZM 151. February goal: Listen to "Move Out" at full volume every day. (WN)
(Border Mangel / Desörden)

PROTESTERA – "Pengarna Eller Livet" CD

After a seven—seven!—minute intro, PROTESTERA kicks into some dual vocal melodic crust that definitely harkens back to the early 2000s. Frequent leads accentuate the "melodic," though there's definitely a metallic crunch to everything, and an annoying boom to the drums. It's OK, but the songs don't go anywhere, and there are a lot of them. (DG)
(Halvfabrikat)

RADIATION BLACKBODY / SEA OF SHIT – Split EP

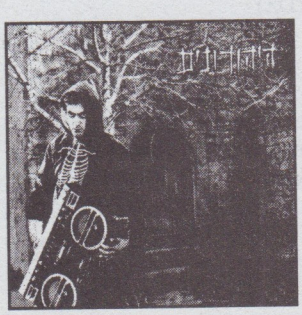
Confounded grind duo RADIATION BLACKBODY serve up two sea-sickening tracks of tarpit formula-splitting skullfuckitude. It is profound that these explicit stroke-inducing rhythms are being vomited forth by only two people. The sound of a paranoid seasure, a cranial contusion. A sort of diabolic instrumental preface for any familiarity you might find on side B. SEA OF SHIT sound far more punch-in-the-face hardcore. Gruesomely articulated powerviolence with death crust vocal elements and pulverizing episodes of hardcore punk, chaotic noise, and slack-posture assassination. Not for the faint of heart. (JR)
(Anthems of the Undesirable)

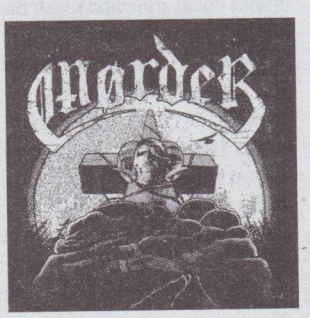
RAMONAS – "First World Problems" CD

This is the second band bearing this moniker I've heard in my lifetime and this one is better than the '90s one by far. As you can guess from their name, they are an all-female RAMONES tribute band. They used to do covers and now they're penning their own tunes that don't all sound like their namesake (that's not a bad thing). Sure songs like "The Daily Fail" and "Tearaway" have the trademark "Hey-Hos" and "1-2-3-4s" but they also have a strong love of JOAN JETT and the DISTILLERS. Put them on a bill with the ROTTIES and the RAZORBURNS or YEAR OF THE FIST and they could hold their own quite well. Now gimme some glue. (RO)
(self-released)

RÄTTENS KRATER – "Urrah!" CD

After a nearly three minute electronic intro, I was ready to ditch this into the "not suitable for these pages" pile, but I'm glad I persisted. Infectious, ass-shaking Swedish indie rock'n'roll—like when FRANZ FERDINAND and the HIVES were busting ass and even the curmudgeonly punks were taking note—drenched in heavy vibes and psychedelia and *demanding* a dance party. (WN)
(Conquest Of Noise)





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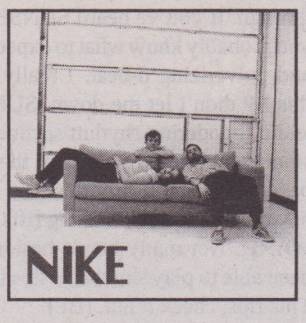
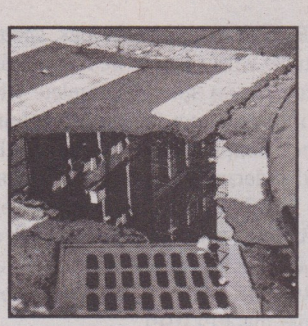




RAZZ – "Time Frames" LP

Not to be confused with '70s DC power poppers, though they mine some of the same pop territories, this newfangled RAZZ is from Oakland. Band features ANDY HUMAN of REPTOIDS and members of TALKIES and PETS, playing rock so pure it's tough to find comparisons, but I'll go with FLAMIN' GROOVIES, Akron's BIZARROS, and the UK '77 first wave of pub punk sounds. Heck, if it were played any faster it would probably sound like PROTEX or the BUZZCOCKS. Great stuff, check it out! (GB)
(Emotional Response)

RED DONS – "Genocide / Letters"

Over the past eleven years, RED DONS have been able to perfectly master their concoction of driving and dark melodic punk. This is the band's first release in two years, and it doesn't disappoint. Side A features the track "Genocide," which has the familiar drive and sound of earlier RED DONS releases. Side B, "Letters," is a little bit slower, but still has that tangy energy. I especially appreciate it when bands can make something sound catchy and melancholy at the same time. As always with this band, excellent songwriting, sound, and performance. For fans of various "dirt" bands (Dirtnap, Dirt Cult) like MARKED MEN, SONIC AVENUES, and STEVE ADAMYK BAND. (DB)
(Man In Decline)

REVEREND ELVIS AND THE UNDEAD SYNCOPATORS – "Gospel Of The Underground: Best of Suzy Q Years 2004–2015" LP

REVEREND ELVIS is a German who summons the ghosts of country and blues music and infuses it with a dark, morbid edge. The songs are mostly lo-fi featuring acoustic guitar with the occasional addition of bass and / or drums. The Reverend excels at the lyrics. They could be juvenile, but he injects them with a sincerity backed by a good singing voice. The result is very enjoyable. The catchiest song "Kill! Kill! Kill!" offers a twisted take on the VIOLENT FEMMES with lyrics about drinking and getting high then going out to kill. It's humorous, demented and deserves extra album plays. (CK)
(Document)

ROLF OCH REVOLTÖRERNA – "Demo" EP

"As soon as I dropped the needle I knew I was thoroughly fucked!" A (somewhat) direct quote from the late Bruce Rohers, effectively expressing that thrill you get from the initial impact of a powerful new arrival. That line stuck with me over the years and it *one-hundred-and-fifty-percent* applies to this slab! You may have heard Rolf do his thing in MISSBRUKARNA and KRIG I HUDIK, or seen his songwriting credits on TOTALITÄR's monumental *Sin Egen Motståndar.* That *should* be enough convincing, but let me just go on to say that your Swedish punk collection has a gaping hole without these four whizzing cuts recorded back in '81–'82. This demo sounds like lost MISSBRUKARNA tracks. Ferocious, speedy, raw, magical slight-timing errors and fucked melodic parts that make me want to quit everything and shrink to a piece of punk dust and just party inside the grooves forever! The last track seems to be a rough live recording, but with an added bonus guitar overdub that's louder than the rest of the record. This shit smokes so hard and I feel so good and I'm so happy! (MA)
(Skrammel)

SECONDHAND UNDERPANTS – "Autopleasures" CD

Whoa, self-identified Riot Grrrls from Turkey! So killer. Off-kilter, wild sounds that remind me of the TRIBE 8 / LUNACHICKS / L7 era of CA punk, super lo fi rampage, tough girl vocals and yowling guitars!!!! I am not super into the more *rawk* style of punk, but this is wild and cool and totally worth investigation! Best song is "Bathwater Soup," a total rager! (LG)
(self-released)

7 DIRTY WORDS – "Along For The Ride" CD

Filthy, meaty Southern California rock'n'roll. They steer clear of generic bar rock potholes, and there's plenty of fiery UK punk in their blood. Snarling vocals yell about women and fighting and booze and stuff while a buzzsaw low end relentlessly grooves. (WN)
(self-released)

SHITTY LIFE – "S/L" EP

I immediately feel the energy of early '00s K-Town punk - spastic and melodic, fast and clean but still super dirty with NEEDLES / NN-esque vocals. And the hooks. It's kinda unreal how effortlessly SHITTY LIFE seem to be able to deliver a barrage of barbs that stick in you the second you drop the needle. "On The Table" is the most straightforward, and possibly the coolest track I've heard all month—power pop vibes, amps way up high, you don't even notice it's an instrumental until it's over. Bold move, and it works. Excellent. (WN)
(Crapoulet / No Front Teeth / Spastic Fantastic / Surfin' Ki)

SINCERE ENGINEER – "Rhombithian" CD

Honest indie rock, with just a pinch of some not terrible emo vocalization from, of course, the Midwest. Well crafted songs that are at one moment triumphant and anthemic, and the next moment sweet and delicate yet gruff, not unlike the finer points of, say, a GOOD LUCK record. The lyrics and vocals are killer, it's technical without sounding like snobbery, and it's sweet without dripping with sap. For fans of former folk punks who are sneakily, secretly, profoundly proficient. Pretty damn tight. (DZ)
(Red Scare)

SNAKE OIL SALESMEN – "Dexter / S.A.D."

This is terrible. Let me rephrase that. This is terrible, unless you're into really dramatic, gothy, metally, over-produced rock that is trying to be everything for everyone, with too much lead guitar and just too much in general. (KK)
(Surf Hearse)

SOCIEDAD DE MIERDA – "¿Que Patria Es Esta?" EP

For the nerds who have dug deep into the history of Peruvian punk, SOCIEDAD DE MIERDA is likely a name you have seen on a bootlegged copy of one of the Rock Subterraneo compilations from between 1985–1987. Over 20 years later, the band is seeing its

first official release. SOCIEDAD DE MIERDA plays furious, snotty, sloppy, unhinged punk. This EP captures what seem to be rough radio recordings on side A and a live recording on side B, complete with jeering and shit-talking. This shit is rough and not for everyone, but I think it's fucking great. The EP comes complete with a thick booklet full of photos, interviews, and flyers that document not only the history of SOCIEDAD DE MIERDA but the '80s Peruvian punk scene as well, in both English and Spanish. If the fury and rawness of bands such as IMAGEN and SOLUCION MORTAL speak to you and / or you enjoy bands such as LEUZEMIA and NARCOSIS and want to explore more of that era of Peruvian punk, don't miss this EP! (BP)
(Rock Svbterraneo)

SOLID SPACE – "Space Museum" LP

After years of being out of print, SOLID SPACE's 1982 cassette is finally officially available to the public! SOLID SPACE formed from the ashes of EXHIBIT A, which were a fairly typical British post-punk band; what followed was anything but. Like YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS before them, the duo of Dan Goldstein and Matthew Vosburgh (both 18 at the time of recording) create a quieter, introspective form of post-punk, albeit with a slightly more expansive (and colorful!) feel than *Colossal Youth*. With its retrofuturist synth tones and lyrics largely influenced by sci-fi, *Space Museum* often feels like a more DIY and punk-inspired version of the explorative music of early PINK FLOYD and HAWKWIND—minus the jamming. A truly incredible album that deserves to be in the post-punk pantheon of greats. Buy it even if you haven't heard it. (JD)
(Dark Entries)

STRESS RELIEF – "Losing / Failing" EP

Great powerful powerviolence hardcore from this Chico / Seattle band. While COKE BUST is the main sonic comparison that I hear, this band's often-dissonant riffing feels more stream-of-consciousness in its structure (or lack thereof), though they're either blasting or sludging most of the time. Eight songs separated only by feedback, with a big recording that's well in the red. Come back to the Bay! (DG)
(Forever Never Ends)

THE STUPID DAIKINI – "Everything Is Fine" LP

A band that chooses a reference to the film *Willow* for their name is going to be chimerical. When that band also chooses to consist of just drums and a ukulele, they're really pushing that right up in the stupid fucking faces of anyone that expects them to not be the goddamned whinnying and frolicking unicorns they just have to be. These two ladies are a fantastic blend of "I'll tell you a wonderful, magical story" and "I'll kick your ass if you cross me." "GFY" is a standout angry track that made sme mile when Melissa Zavislak polite-snarled, "I hope that you die in a real fucked up way." (RH)
(It's Alive)

SUNSHINE WARD – "Nuclear Ambitions" LP

Goddamn!!! This record kicks in and doesn't let up the whole way through. If you've heard SUNSHINE WARDs last release *Order*, then you probably know what to expect. SUNSHINE WARD plays relentless and pulverizing d-beat. I really enjoyed their last EP and demo and this LP didn't let me down. SUNSHINE WARD delivers vicious riffs and a thundering rhythm section that occasionally will venture into a stompy, mid-tempo pace but then quickly return to a blistering d-beat pace. A lot of bands of this vein rely on volume and distortion without having good and interesting riffs. That is not the case with SUNSHINE WARD. Not many bands besides WARCRY in recent memory have been able to play shit that is this brutal and also catchy at the same time. This rips, check it out. (BP)
(Bloody Master)

SWINGIN' UTTERS – "Down With The Sea, Rising With The Sun" CD

Thirty-three tracks from this local bands back catalog—call it a "best of" if you want. This plays pretty great as a standalone album. Sure, some of my faves aren't included, but if you want an introduction to this long-running band this is a good place to start. Dating back to the late '80s, these guys could always dish out a good punk, street punk, and Celtic punk tune. (RL)
(Fat)

TARANTÜLA – "Weird Tales of Radiation and Hate" EP

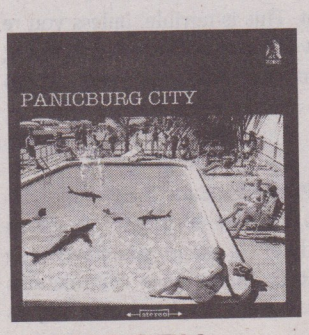
Leave it to Chicago to bring back synth punk; these ex-CÜLO aficionados went so far as enlisting GEZA X (of Dangerhouse's DEADBEATS) for mastering. Great five-song EP of unrelenting hardcore punk with added flashes of that synth punk x-factor to bring it all over the top. I just wish they used keyboards on all the tracks; "Oozing Skull" is such a killer. Can't wait to hear what they come up with next. (GB)
(Deranged)

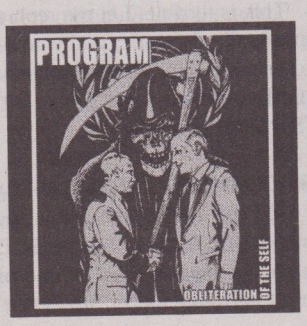
TFG – "G.O.P. (Gag On Penis)" CD

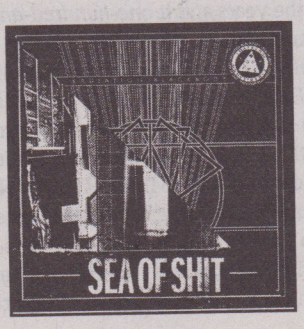
Homoerotic anti-Trump synth-drenched art punk. Humor (and talent) similar to SOCKEYE, but TFG don't approach that level of wit (though I commend them for the topical "God Wants You To Make That Cake"). This screams of a bunch of straight dudes turning rehearsal room gay jokes into a pro-gay "band," if that even makes sense. I confess though, the video for "Orange Anus" is pretty fuckin' hilarious. Cover art by Mike Diana, if that's your thing. (WN)
(TFG World)

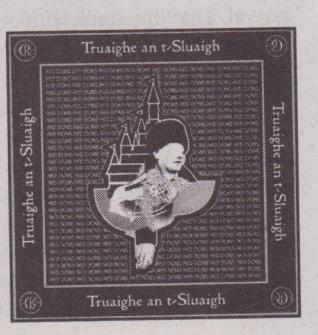
THEKENPROMINENZ – "Wenn Wir Die Letzten Sind..." CD

I have a soft spot for bands (well, particularly German ones) that sing in German and skinhead bands with two guitarists. This quintet ticks both of those boxes, though since everything is in German, I haven't really the faintest idea of what they're chatting about. As well as the twin axe attack (though there's not enough of the twin guitar solos *à la* IRON MAIDEN for my liking), they definitely are in the LAST RESORT "Freedom" realm of skinhead music. They even throw in a power ballad that wouldn't embarrass THIN LIZZY (too much) and a









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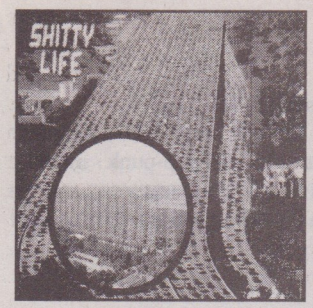

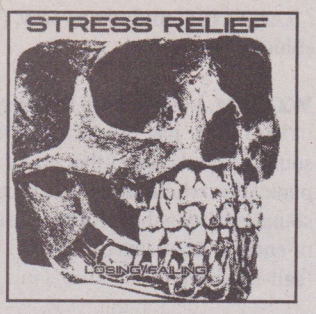

JOHNNY CASH cover (I think—they are singing in German), which I could do without. The vocals aren't too gruff, and the melodies are catchy. I've heard a lot worse! (RK)
(Spirit Of The Streets)

TOTAL CONTROL – "Laughing at the System" LP

I'm not sure if this is a concept album about the future (near or not) but I've decided that it is. Side A is dense and constricted, starting out with "Laughing at the System" to set the stage of approaching the dying of human life in a shit system with a nihilistic view. With its cold electronics and barked vocals, this keeps with the stunted shuffle of UV RACE but takes on the android gleam of GARY NUMAN. This first half of the record is claustrophobic and tense with impotent anger. The only moment of expanse comes in "Future Creme" which acts as an advertisement for artificial pleasures. On side B, we've all given up and given in, delving into naiveté and flying through the beauty of nothing. The synths ease into a LAURIE SPIEGEL tone of light and airy blip blops; the world is still sinister but the rose-colored glasses make it so it doesn't matter. Even the surroundings cease to be described by the time the instrumental "Cathie and Marg" floats in. The album ends with a slam back into a current reality coming from the more punk and / or traditional rock'n'roll instrumentation redo of "Laughing at the System," ripping us out of a relaxed fantasy and steering us back to the beginning drudge of a bleak future. (MM)
(Alter)

TRES OUI – "Singles Going Nowhere" 12"

It's a bit of a stretch to call this shimmering indie pop with very lush production *Maximum Rocknroll*. The songwriting and musicianship are at a very high level, but there's nothing here that really relates to anything else in the magazine in terms of DIY punk. If you like the idea of a less baroque BELLE AND SEBASTIAN, you'll probably enjoy this record. (AM)
(Austin Town Hall / Square Of Opposition)

2 HEADED DOG – "The Boy Next Door" CDEP

Remember when you went on vacation a few years ago to some touristy armpit town just a few hours away? You were there for a few days and almost went batshit, so you went to the only bar in town that plays "rock" music. So then these fuckin' haircuts take the stage, take off their fuckin' shirts, polish their pro-ass, more expensive than your entire life gear, and shoot a few dopey, self-serving grins and nods to the crowd (their partners, mostly). You are realizing that you are about to get your ass thoroughly kicked by several grown ass children of lumberjacks and meat packers, who haven't had a chance to teach a townie a lesson in months. You're about to get plastered and throw your twelve dollar drink on them, along with whatever vile grumbles you can come up with on a moments notice, when you realize that they aren't fucking terrible! Fast, catchy-yet-mediocre rock. The first song (of a three song CD for fucks sake) is even a testosterone-laden swipe from an X textbook. You'll never play this boring ass dude rock again, but you won't shit-talk it either. (DZ)
(self-released)

UNMANNED BRAIN – "I Stand Down" EP

The first two songs on side A fit together well, both riding along in a mid-tempo, melodic punk vein. I would almost believe they were both part of the same song. They play well and it's catchy, but both songs very similar. Side B is a slower, longer song that has a completely different feel to it, relying on dragging out simple guitar riffs in a way that recalls WIRE and GANG OF FOUR while not entirely venturing into that territory. Good shit, but side B is the one that has me coming back for more. (GH)
(self-released)

THE VIRGINIA GENTLEMEN – "Go All Night" EP

I've been transported back to Black Lung Records territory by these Gents, ridin' a legacy centered on CANDY SNATCHERS and latter-day affiliates. Traditionally straight rockisms make the rounds here: layered guitar twist'n'burn, barroom rhythm skids, tough-spit vox, the whole firecracker. I applaud the focus on sonics over theatrics, as this really buries BORN LOOSE and other recent offerings from this sect. About as unhip as a 7" could be in 2018, but no visible stink lines are risin' offa this 'un. I'm not not gonna skip down to my meth market and trade my teeth for a copy or anything, but it ain't that sucky! (MC)
(Idle Edsel)

UT – "Ut & Confidential" 2x12"

This is a necessary and powerful reissue. The sounds contained within seem suddenly so relevant and important in the face of our end times existence. In the same way that the RAINCOATS' joyous, shambolic, and liberating sounds captured the decay of London, existing in the spaces between destroyed, squatted buildings and art enabled by economic destruction, UT's dark, primal, fragmented noise makes real the city crumble of downtown NYC in the early '80s. The stark sound of the avant garde in the face of Reaganomics despair. UT was made up of three women who traded instruments and band responsibilities, deconstructing the ideas of rock and stars and creating a fragmenting, deconstructed music. That damaged bass rumble sound with shards of guitar now almost seems like a no wave cliché, but listening to these two incredible 12"s is a powerful experience, like watching super early footage of A CERTAIN RATIO, the way there's almost a punk-funk industrial continuum. Check out the classic "Sham Shack" for further instruction on that. Each song is a masterpiece, beautifully destroyed and fragmented and so, so necessary. Packaged as two 12"s in one, this is a cool way for people who don't live in Europe to grab these records. (LG)
(Out)

VOICE OF ADDICTION – "The Lost Art of Empathy" CD

This is a melodic political hardcore band from Chicago. They mix it up with some ska-ish and acoustic songs. This reminds of an uptempo AGAINST ME! and a more shouting BAD RELIGION. This is a new band to me even though they have been doing it for 10 years or so. While this is good and full of passion, it doesn't really stand out amongst the heavy hitters on established punk labels. (RL)
(self-released)

THE VON HOWLERS – "Burgundy Surf" 12"

Swampy surf rock'n'roll, you can practically smell the haze that is pierced by the brilliantly shrill vocals—a perfect warble that complements the surf guitars and drags these throwback sounds into the aughts. Sultry sounds, simultaneously dark and sexy, instantly appealing even to folks (like me) with no particular affinity for the genre...but good is good, y'all. (WN)
(Surf Hearse)

WADGE – "The End Of Ethnology" CD

Jesus, this thing is mean. Grindcore can go a lot of different ways, but WADGE just go for the throat. Jerk off riffs and a machine gun snare doing battle with devastating heaviness that only increases in ominosity when they (rarely) slow down. Throaty vocals like a bridge between Brannon and Lactose (if you know, then you know), while the punishment continues. "Gaping Maws Hang Crammed" is perhaps the fiercest in this 36-song collection (including the fours "bonus" covers on the CD version), but there aren't exactly any pleasant moments here. (WN)
(Mortville)

WHIP – "Weak Flesh" EP

Sick, bratty punk, with jittery and angular loose guitar riffs that's laden with plenty of lo-fi scuzz. These Winnipeg punks drive through six songs on this EP, with "Control" literally ruling my world right now. Comes with deliciously perfect pink / black licorice cover art, so shut up and eat it already. (CR)
(Neck Chop)

THE WINDOWSILL – "Make Your Own Kind Of Music" CD

From the Netherlands, this band has past members of the APERS. These guys aren't as snotty as the APERS, while still following their pop punk past. They actually have more a TRAVOLTAS feel especially vocally. This is a decent full length as they keep it simple in a QUEERS / RAMONES mid-tempo way. (RL)
(Shield)

W.O.R.M. – "We Only Rehearse Monthly" CD

W.O.R.M. has been kicking around the UK since 1992, and their sound reminds me of that era of early-to-mid-'90s pop-punk / melodic punk. The whole thing was recorded live at a show last year, and the sound quality is better than a usual live recording while retaining a lot of energy. Good shit. (GH)
(self-released)

V/A – "THE PROBLEM WITH SAN ANTONIO IS..." EP

Side A begins with a track from DEATH AND TEXAS, a miserable intro which reminds me of many '90s crust acts *à la* DISRUPT, SARCASM, and DYSTOPIA. Solid old school crust. SPOKESMODEL play a brighter, psychotic and cacophonic anthem, like MELT BANANA meets POST REGIMENT. HOTZI starts side B, spitting venomous misanthropic squat-style punk with licks of southern sludge and blackened doom. The CUTTHROATS wrap things up with street-stomping grizzly punk. Reminds me of Connecticut's BROKEN and are welcome outspoken no-frills ferocity. From dark to dangerous; this is a good complication, an appetizer sample of the current sound in San Antonio. (JR)
(Live Loud or Die)

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DEMOS

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(AT) Alex Turner
(BP) Ben Paulson
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JB) Julia Booz
(JR) Jason Ryan
(LB) Lourdes June Benavente
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MD) Michael de Toffoli
(MR) Matt Reynolds

BANBANG! – This sounds like leather pants! With song titles including "Damaged Women" and "My Lesbian Girlfriend Went Straight," I wish the lyrics were included so I could take a closer look. Some of the parts I could make out mentioned independent women needing shoes and tearing skin off like bacon. The music appears to all be composed by one guy and the vocals are done by another. This shock-rock is kind of a gross bummer and I don't really wanna listen to it again. (LB) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, banbang.bandcamp.com)

BLANK WHEN ZERO – *Taped* – These Germans have been at it since 2010, and this is their newest recording (eight songs from 2016), as well as I think the complete band discography. Hardcore with metal leanings and some gang vocals. That world (in the states at least) has never struck me as very political but this band is proudly "Anti-Fascist, animal-friendly, gay-positive, pro-feminist, FCKNZS." So I'm not quite sure where to put them, but I'd imagine putting this on after a shitty day of work riding my bike home in the rain and finally feeling ok. (AT) (25-song cassette, lyrics not included, blankwhenzero.bandcamp.com)

BLEEDERS – *We Hate Men* – The lyrics are a calmly worded manifesto, perhaps written conspiratorially between comrades at a slumber party, a blend of sass and seething condemnation. Primarily they are concerned with rape culture, gender war, reproductive rights, and female joy. There's a lot of high pitched gang vocal squealing, spoken word goading, and sultry moments that lead to bored commentary, all over choppy distorted power chords and occasional bright and sparkling leads (and a keyboard on one song!). It sounds like punk infomercials for a feminist sketch comedy series. I really like it, but I hope they are faster and scarier than this live. (JB) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, bleeders.bandcamp.com)

BUNDOLO – Helsinki hardcore! The leading track leans more in a NYHC-meets-'90s crust direction. After that they mostly stay on a fast and reckless road, deviating with a couple breakdowns. Tough and gruff sounding without coming off as macho. If CITIZENS ARREST meets Finnish hardcore sounds good to you, might wanna check this one out. (MA) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, bundolo.bandcamp.com)

CEMENT SHOES – Six growly, powerfully brutal tracks with dark dystopian lyrics and plenty of guitar shreddage and breakdowns from Richmond, VA. Without sacrificing ruthlessness, CEMENT SHOES has a subtle underlying rock'n'roll vibe that keeps things sounding fresh in a fun but probably self-destructive way. Exactly what it sounds like to drive your body face-first into a circle pit while the world is crumbling into the ruins of the Vile Fascist Future. (HB) (6-song tape, lyrics included, cementshoes.bandcamp.com)

DEATH RIDGE BOYS – I love Oi!, but it can be sketchy territory, which keeps me away from that scene. The tape starts with an anthem about how Tamir Rice was innocent so we are on the same political page. Catchy as hell hooks and sing-along gang vocals don't stop, and neither do the politics (shout outs and songs about Black Lives Matter, fighting and dealing with the alt-right / Nazis, Standing Rock, and saving the planet we seem so hell-bent on destroying). With members of CRIMINAL DAMAGE, RAW NERVES, and TALK IS POISON, I bet this short run of tapes (from Indonesia!) is gone, but it's getting released as a 12" soon. (AT) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, deathridgeboys.bandcamp.com)

DEHIDRATALT FEJEK – Punk from Budapest, Hungary with a clean, garage-y guitar sound that is reminding me of PJ Bonneman's (GORILLA ANGREB / SUNBATHER) solo material in its smooth execution. Also, would you believe '90s era SEBADOH (think "Skull" and not the acoustic home recordings)? The melodies in each song are simple yet effective and the band sounds confident while not taking themselves too seriously. They also tackle the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES' "Part Time Punks." I can't stop playing this. (GH) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, dehidrataltfejek.bandcamp.com)

DEVIL MASTER – *Inhibit the Corpse* – After an intro like something out of a Dario Argento film, a cascade of metal guitar tapping bursts into full metal punk onslaught. I'm under the impression that there's a fair amount of hype around this band in some niche of DIY metal punk, so those of you more scenester than I are probably already after this (or already have it). I'm admittedly not often turned on by metal things, but I find this to be worth a bunch more listens. Firstly, I'm a fan of guitars, so the rich and evil Randy Uchida-inspired licks and general chilling sense of melody (especially on "Gates of Pain") are hitting that sweet spot. I prefer this galloping pace DEVIL MASTER mainly treads over blasting or primitive black metal drumming, though the vocals are black metal in nature. A video I found online reveals corpse paint and capes and shit, and while I find it campy I don't get the feeling they're joking...Anyway, shit rips. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, devilmaster.bandcamp.com)

DIRK CLIFTON'S PENNY CREAM BAND – *Hey, Nice Leather Jacket* – You know that feeling when you hear a borderline inept band with a recording that is "bad," but still kinda good and the band is still in control of what they're doing? That's what this sounds like. Simple rock'n'roll, three-chord songs held down by shambling, cavernous drums and a singer with an attitude like he wants to give a fuck but is possibly a little embarrassed about it. (GH) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact found)

DISTANT FRIENDS – *Nothing Really Mattress* – An alternative garage rock band

from Eau Claire, Wisconsin delivers several solid easy-to-listen-to jams. This album is a great soundtrack for doin' shit. It has those '90s talk-singing vocals with some tin can telephone effects. This poppy garage rock feels familiar, but also at times strays away from what you may expect in a real cool way. The band did a damn fine job of making something that is all their own. (LB) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, ddistantfriends.bandcamp.com)

DISVEIN – *The Endless Fight* – DISVEIN plays melodic crust / hardcore with a good dose of metal leads, thundering double bass and blast beats. Some moments are much more on the straightforward hardcore tip while others venture more into metal or even grindcore. The vocal duties are often shared between the high-screeching and low-growling vocals. All of these different elements together remind me of many bands that would have been featured on the distro list of Profane Existence in the early 2000s, such as ASSCHAPEL or PROVOKE. If that's up your alley, check out DISVEIN. (BP) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, disvein.bandcamp.com)

THE DUMPIES – *Billie Jean King* – This tape sounds like those real nice kids at the party that may or may not steal your beer and cigarettes. The singer gives you muffled catchy melodies on one track and then frantically yells at you real punk-like in the next. The guitar tracks feel like they were given a lot of thought, are well-timed, and fuckin' rule. I enjoyed how present the bass and drum tracks were on this recording. They aren't lost in the music, but in fact deliver some of the best moments on the tape. At times the music was reminiscent of little kids' songs. These sound like songs you have heard before...and you like them. (LB) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, thedumpies.bandcamp.com)

EARTHWITCH – *Out of the Shallow* – A twitchy version of HIGH ON FIRE, TAD and BLACKFOOT, this southern-sounding hard rock tape from Illinois swoons about the cosmos, tripping the necropsy fantastic, and mermaids. Solos are distorted and fine, while pitches dive into diminutive zones witch [sic] keep any lofty classic rock categorization grounded into grittier playas. Vocals are sort of BIG BUSINESS, MISFITS, with an air of banality. Spacy entries remind me of GRAVEYARD or "Planet Caravan." By the end I was meowing along to the melodies. (JR) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, earthwitch.bandcamp.com)

FLESH MOTHER – *Nourishment* – Down-tuned and dirty, Cincinnati's FLESH MOTHER returns with another near flawless release of earth-moving hardcore. They pick up the tempo more than I remember in the past, but the blood and guts of this band lies in the slower, sludgy parts, when it sounds like the bass strings are rattling on the neck. The guitar is nothing short of total destruction and the vocals are tortured and confident. When I hear FLESH MOTHER, I picture a house shaking off of its foundation and crumbling to the goddamn ground. Excellent all around. (GH) (7-song CD-R, lyrics included, fleshmother@gmail.com)

RICKY HAMILTON – *Killed By Ricky* – Second solo (with backing band) effort from Ricky (who is in SHAGG and FASCINATING) outta Cleveland. The easiest comparison is to JAY REATARD, plus a clarinet. It's a little weirder and less straightforward than Jay's stuff, and the drum machine is a little slower, but it's got that same no wave energy. Also reminds me of a slew of house parties that GENE DEFCON played in the early '00s. I hope the Cleveland scene has got that same feeling. Total party! (AT) (8-Song cassette, lyrics not included, rickyhamilton.bandcamp.com)

HOT SEWER / WOLFSBLOOD – First up we've got Winnipeg's HOT SEWER with some kick-back surfy garage. A reverb-drenched live sound with a light-hearted feel results in fairly middle of the road stuff. The release only contains HOT SEWER info and art, but WOLFSBLOOD tunes are added on the b-side. They're doing slow–fast–slow hardcore with heavy, dynamic rhythms and a tough vocal. Songs are a bit more drawn out than your typical powerviolence affair. (MA) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, littlecowboyrecords@gmail.com)

I.B. SOMETIMES – *W.T.F.* – I think the name of release pretty much explains itself. It sounds like the BEATLES made a children's record. (HB) (10-song CD, lyrics not included, facebook.com/ibsometimes)

IMPULSO – Powerful sounding hardcore punk from Italy. Heavy use of the delayed vocal trick, as well as some other delay-generated noise effects give this an arty / mutant punk tinge at times. At best it reminds me of DESTINO FINAL, though IMPULSO doesn't have quite as many hooks. Pretty screen printed J-card and great first effort. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, nessunimpulso.bandcamp.com)

LADYSHARK – *Lovesick* – There is a lot of musical talent happening on this CD. The music reminds of me of BEST COAST, and I can hear a SLEATER-KINNEY relation too. Guitar, bass, and drums all come together and blend comfortably, *but* I can't get past some of the disconnected vocal melodies and the lyrical content. The lyrics are current and somewhat relatable, but painfully cheesy and lacking depth. I can't comfortably recommend this record to anyone over the age of fifteen. I hope to hear this band in the future and be stoked that the lyrical content caught up to the quality of the instrumental contribution. (LB) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, ladyshark.bandcamp.com)

LONG CON – *Demo 2017* – An atrocious mess of finely toned grind, hardcore, thrash metal and spastic mathematic blasts. What the headache is going on here? Exhausting hardcore. (JR) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, longcon666.bandcamp.com)

MIXED SIGNALS – I usually like to keep my demo reviews short and to the point, but I just wanted to point out that Eric Nelson (vocals / guitar in MIXED SIGNALS) has been consistently cranking out the anthems to my (and countless others') life for about *25 goddamn years* without expecting (and rarely receiving) any major praise. He keeps moving forward, writing new songs and trying to bring a positive light into this world amid all the bullshit that tries to bring us down. He's kept so many of us southern punks hopeful without turning a blind eye to the ever-present terribleness that tries to consume our souls. That being said, MIXED SIGNALS is the next wonderful chapter in this world of tuneful and powerful punk. Anchored by a solid rhythm section (Heather on bass and Sam on drums), the songs branch into different melodic directions, sometimes recalling later HÜSKER DÜ with their backing acoustic guitar tracks, but it's still rough around the edges in all the best ways. Some will say "region rock" and they are right too. The lyrics are hopeful, bitter, and resonant. It was recorded in the basement of Chattanooga, Tennessee's longest running punk house. Get thee to thy buying button on the internet or send your cash to these punks. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, lifertapes@gmail.com, Lifer Tapes, 2201 Kirby Ave, Chattanooga, TN 37404)

MOCK IDENTITY – DC spits out another post-punk (not goth / deathrock) outfit with members of SUPERSONIC PISS, INSECT FACTORY, HEART OF THE GHOST DOUBLE TRIO, and ANTONIA. Parts remind me of DRIVE LIKE JEHU or JUNE OF 44, but I don't wanna pin them with labels like emo or math rock. This is angrier, more political, and less self-absorbed then what happened in the past. Four songs in ten minutes keeps everything exciting and the

listener from getting distracted. Great first effort—I bet their next recording (I think they are recording now) should be out sometime next year, and should be a ripper. (AT) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, mockidentity.bandcamp.com)

NEON – *Neon is Life* – A savage detailed directory of anger, obsession, stooge Capitalism, and the trappings of flesh. The catchy grittiness of the guitar lines are astral; she unfolds feedback into new registers. These searing, unusual melodies of the guitar dance under the grunts, whoops, chants, and aching cries of the vocals, while the rhythm section charges forth with demented fervor. How is this only five songs? Grace sounds like she's eating the microphone; it's an imprint in my skull, a locked track that repeats and weaves in and out through my daily dealings like stitches, like a scar. (JB) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, neonislife.bandcamp.com)

NO BLUES – Driving, lo-fi garage punk that is unbelievably catchy and maybe even a little glam. There's an unrelenting driving force running through every track, like if the MARKED MEN turned up the fuzz and turned down the tempo. The power pop intentions behind this tape will make you want to dance around, but the gritty, maxed-out style of the recording will make you want to smash bottles while you are doing that. (HB) (5-song tape, lyrics not included, blowbloodrecords.bandcamp.com)

OVER – *Vacant Daydream* – There is something so big and theatrical about this darkwave / deathrock adventure that it's not too much of a stretch of the imagination to picture OVER on the stage of an arena surrounded by blinding scaffold-lighting and a tight crew of the people who believed in them when they were just a DIY band playing basements and dive bars around Portland. And beyond that tight crew is a sea of teens in black fishnet accessories and thick eyeliner who, given the benefit of a bunch of superstar queer, femme, and non-binary role models, will probably grow up to be way cooler than the generation before them. The six tracks on this tape center unstoppable dance beats over dark and haunting melodies that will inspire you to dance through the pain of living in this modern dystopia we call home. (HB) (6-song tape, lyrics included, overpdx.bandcamp.com)

OWNER – Damn, this demo is cool! The tape opens up with a raging riff that brings POISON IDEA or GLUE to mind and then takes an unexpected turn when the vocals kick in. At moments the reverbed-vocals almost feel like they could be on a post-punk record, which adds a really interesting element when combined with the more hardcore riffs. This shit is catchy and full of interesting, subtle intricacies. Songs like "Sigh" slow things down a little bit and go in a darker direction (think *Dance With Me*-era TSOL) while still maintaining the intensity. Then in "Nothing to Say" the '80s Boston style stompy pace will have you dancing (and / or moshing) before you realize it. It's hard to think of immediate comparisons to OWNER, which I think is fucking great. Many of the ferocious riffs and driving rhythms brings classic '80s USHC (F.U.s or NEGATIVE FX) to mind while the vocal style and delivery takes things in a darker and unexpected direction. Can't wait to hear more from OWNER! Check out this demo! (BP) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, nervousenergyrecords.bandcamp.com)

PIGFLAYER – *Life Alert* – I can see these guys tearing a place up with their swanky garage rock garbage and bizarre cut-to-the-vein compositions. A totally blown-out recording is giving this tape tremendous gutter cred. Shit-drum deconstruction, strangulating guitars, nightmarish claustrophobia-inducing vocals. It sounds like "Lord of the Trash Can Flies." A project within a projectile vomit. Awesome flower-trippy death doodle artwork on the sleeve. Good work! Hail PIGFLAYER! (JR) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, qualitytimerecords.bandcamp.com)

POST/BOREDOM – *Casual Friday* – Seatown avant-heroes making acidic noise-punk with a tumbling avalanche of doom similar to TRICLOPS! or their labelmates LIL' DOWAGER. Schizophrenic yelling vocals, slightly harmonized, give each voice an unhindered and cornered-animal thrash. The punishing and plummeting drums have as much force when they plummet as they do when they explode like a thunderclap, and noise-burst guitars keep the equilibrium of the chaos nice and off-kilter. All of this is grounded and corralled by mind-expanding, space monster BRIAN COOK-esque bass growls. It's like a car accident that keeps crashing and flipping through the air. Smashing into concrete, earth, and bodies, waiting to finally screech to a halt, or finally be stopped by something solid enough, but miraculously keeps flying. This is such a solid recording that's challenging yet catchy enough to drag you comfortably along. (MD) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, conditionsrecords.bandcamp.com)

RED DELICIOUS – *Bad Apple EP* – Total pogo jams from Chicago sung in Portuguese. The drums seem to drive this more than most bands, and the bass is holding it all together. The singer (despite my inability to understand her) really grabs my attention, and the guitar squeals around the edges perfectly. Makes me wanna jump around in a sweat-filled basement and then stumble home and eat a shit ton of tater tots with my roommates. For fans of regular, straight-up punk, released by Not Normal. (AT) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, reddeliciousbridgeport.bandcamp.com)

SUZI TRASH – *Born On All Fours* – A pretty long-winded effort from this Springfield, MO group. It sounds like a tone-deaf DIY score for a play interspersed with field recordings, poetry and other ramblings. I appreciate the whimsical qualities but this whole production is a bit too meandering for me on a tape—but maybe it comes across more fun as a live set. (MA) (25-song cassette, lyrics not included, suzitrash.bandcamp.com)

VACUUM – Chicago's VACUUM is a little too dissonant to be a straightforward pop band and has too many hooks to become overwhelmed by dissonance. Double vocal harmonies carry these songs through melodic punk territory with quick stopovers in grunge-land and queercore. Head-bopping, toe-tapping, and rather pleasant. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, vacuum4444.bandcamp.com)

WASH – Atlanta's WASH throws out eight sometimes-manic, sometimes-reflective blasts of post-hardcore that are heavy on the energy, intricacy, and inventiveness. The band uses feedback and noise to great effect, harnessing the energy and making it work in their favor rather than having it overpower everything. Under all of these levels of feedback and chaos is a blanket of melody that propels each song forward. Features members of OTOPHOBIA, GG KING, BUKKAKE BOYS, and many more. (GH) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, scavengerofdeath.storenvy.com)

XRDM – Malaysia's XRDM plays fast and pissed hardcore punk that at some points almost crosses over into fastcore / grindcore. This release is one of their older titles from 2014 and they have since released another tape. This one blazes through and is over before you realize it. The rhythm section is blistering and rarely lets up from breakneck speed. Moments of vocal melody help to change things up throughout this tape. The lyrics are very thoughtful and critical as well. If you like your hardcore political, pissed and fast as hell, check out XRDM. Up the international punx! (BP) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, xrdm.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Evaluate What You Tolerate Vol 1.* – Twenty-five bands from the Bay Area. This is

DEMOS

a fundraiser for the Anti Police-Terror Project and is explicitly against white supremacy, racism and hate, so just go ahead and get this already. It's $10 and all the money goes to a good cause. With bands covering indie dream pop (WAX IDOLS), feminist metal (RAGANA), post-punk (COMPOSITE, MYSTIC PRIESTESS), hardcore (SUPER UNISON), and the list of genres and bands goes on and on. There's also an accompanying zine, which was reviewed in the last issue. (AT) (25-songs cassette, lyrics not included, bit.ly/bash-fash)

V/A – *Evaluate What You Tolerate Vol 2.* – Like volume one above, this is $10 and all the money goes to benefit the Anti Police-Terror Project. This one is twenty-four bands and covers a lot of ground in the massive Bay Area scene from hardcore bands NO STATIK, MOZART, and DRAMA (who I'm betting is the next hardcore hype band outta the Bay) to the squeaking saxophone of PREENING, the deeply SF sounds of SPACE TOILET, and Truewave leaders STREET EATERS. I think everybody sent in their most political song. Punk is rooted in politics and our collective desire for freedom for all, let's never forget! (AT) (24-song cassette, lyrics not included, bit.ly/bash-fash)

V/A – *EXT002: Exhibition Compilation Vol.2* – Exhibition Tapes returns with another *suuuper* eclectic batch of songs from the four corners of the country, and at least three corners of the globe. Ninety minutes, thirty-one bands and a hefty zine including photos, words, art, and band submissions. Side one is labeled as "Loud," with raunchy / dirty / chunky gaze, bright lightning bolt garage punk, introspective indie punk, wash-punk, life-changing indie ballads, and '90s convertible sunshine alt-radio. Side two is labeled as "Louder" and features frantic noisegasm punk, pushed-beyond-belief powerviolence, deathrow avant-gore, trad homemade lofi powerviolence, rock-bottom sludge doom, and so on...This is what I hope for in a comp. It's more than a collection. It's a huge gathering of hungry bands that are proud to have their music released physically. This tape is a personal DIY festival right in your ears, and everyone is trying to outdo each other. (MD) (32-song cassette, lyrics not included, exhibitiontapes.bandcamp.com)

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(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(ED) Evie Deller
(GJ) Griffin Jones
(GM) Gina Murrell
(JD) Joan DeToro
(RH) Ryan Hertel

BAY AREA BIKING BABE #31, #32, #33, #34
$0.50 / 8 pgs
Each issue of this hand-drawn mini-zine focuses on one idea and packs in much more whimsy than should fit into a folded 8.5"x11" sheet of paper. Grab a few of them and be delighted for a little while. Issue #31 covers some women and biking events, #32 is the retelling of one bad day of biking, #33 illustrates some different bike frame types, and #34 lists some of the zinester's hobbies. Think of each issue like a quick treat, like popping a piece of bike-focused candy for a quick burst of happy. (RH)
zoeycorp@yahoo.com

BORDER ART: A PRIMER #1
36 pgs
In March 2015, the exhibition "The Border Again" opened at Human Resources, a gallery in Los Angeles. The multimedia exhibit showcased the work of artists, from Tijuana and Los Angeles, exploring the concept of borders, thoughts on the border (Tijuana), and art made along the US-Mexico border. Accompanying the exhibit was this zine, *Border Art: A Primer*, created by community organizer Luisa Martinez and writer Reuben Torres. The zine, through texts and images (some, stills from the gallery show), gives background on the U.S.-Mexico border through history lessons, reviews of other exhibitions on the border, and profiles of authors and artists whose work pertain to the border. *Border Art: A Primer* also strives to dispel misconceptions about the border, as well as dissect the notion of "Postborder." (GM)
info@humanresourcesla.com

GEN-X GARBAGE #2
$3 / 12 pgs
Gen-X Garbage is a perzine series about online dating from the perspective of Poliana, "a 39-year-old disabled queer Boricua librarian." In this second installment in the series, Poliana shares sexually aggressive messages men sent her through online dating site Plenty Of Fish. One such message is from Henricci: "Hi, sorry to be so blunt but I'd love to eat you out." Reflecting on these messages from trash men, Poliana says in *Gen-X Garbage* #2, "No 'hello' or even a 'sup. Why are men like this?" Any woman who's ever waded into the online dating waters can confirm that Poliana's experience is far from atypical. To these women, the messages from men reprinted in *Gen-X Garbage* #2 will feel painfully familiar. (GM)
bibliophiliac.bigcartel.com

IDENTITY CRISIS
$3 / 8 pgs
This poetic, self-reflective essay is overlaid over full-color collages from found magazines. For only eight pages, the emotional journey the reader takes with the writer feels like a marathon you can't drop out of. As a "Brown disabled intersex middle-aged librarian," it is highly unlikely that many, if any, readers will share all of the same intersectional identities as the writer, so this zine will provide a window into experiences most readers will never know. It's a necessary ride. (RH)
bibliophiliac.bigcartel.com

OUT IN THE STICKS #1
£3.00 / 44 pgs
Subtitled "Interviews With Drummers From The UK DIY Music Scene," this debut issue covers the topic of becoming a drummer through fourteen interviews with drummers from a wide swath of experience levels and backgrounds. It is the brainchild of Jaca Freer, a drummer, teacher, and event organizer with seemingly endless energy and passion (check out Freer Ideas to see what I mean). If you're a drummer or just interested in the art, this is a good place to soak up the enthusiasm of fourteen drummers to add to your brain's drum community. Also, tidbits such as the one drummer who picked up the sticks because of the film *Hocus Pocus* make it a fun read too. (RH)
freerideas.org

PICKING UP YOUR FIRST PAIR OF DRUMSTICKS
£2 / 16 pgs
A basic description of, and how to get started with, playing a basic rock drum set. If you feel weird about asking a million straight white dudes how to play drums, or feel like it's out of your realm for a thousand other reasons we tell ourselves these things, Jaca has set out to answer some basic questions, show you some rudimentary, essential shit (like how to sit, how to hold the sticks and why that's important) and help you take the first or second step towards becoming a drummer. I am *so* into this. It's a little too professional for me, but I get the need for professionalism. There's an internet resource guide, as well as referencing actual books to check out. Not exactly a punk zine, but this is a dedicated effort to teach you to go for it, and seems especially geared to those who are sometimes made to feel like they don't belong in rock, so they get my vote. (DZ)
jaca@freerideas.org

RAZORCAKE #101
$4 / 116 pgs
If you're reading this, you likely already know *Razorcake*, and there is a good chance you enjoy *Razorcake* every once in a while when you see it around. This issue is special and you need to grab it now though! "One Punk's Guide to Professional Wrestling" by James Rosario is necessary reading. I admit I'm biased as a dedicated lover of the squared circle, but I have to believe that any punk that gives this twelve page article a read will come away with a respect for the world

ZINES

of wrestling and potentially take the dive into it. Come find me after you read this, so we can talk about how punk wrestling is! See you at the show! (RH)
razorcake.org

ROT #7: THE CALIFORNIA YEARS 2
$2 / 53 pgs
Toward the beginning of *Rot*, Oakland artist Arthur Katrina has scanned in the full dictionary definition of the word "aggregated." What stands out to me is the term as used in botany: "[of a flower] formed of florets collected in a dense cluster but not cohering." Who doesn't sometimes (or constantly) experience their lives as an incoherent cluster of totally disparate selves and events? I've always been kind of obsessed by this thought, and Arthur Katrina's zine perfectly embodies it. *Rot* is amazing. I loved reading it, I loved rereading it and re-seeing the beautiful, occultish drawings and symbols scattered throughout. The zine alternates between accounts of the author's grief following the loss of a loved one in 2016, critiquing the usurpation of intimacy by incorporated technology, and exploring the promises and failures of a hyper-idealized California. *Rot* is a palimpsest of Arthur Katrina's unconscious: memories, thoughts, and images, sometimes just shadowy and cracked enough as to be indecipherable but keep you searching for something to recognize. The body in pain, the body reaching out toward others, building itself amid a million social, technological, biological contexts. Arthur Katrina calls it "learning to live in the end times"—in a constant state of imminent collapse in San Francisco, the edge of the West, "where white people come for their last hopes." People move here to disappear, to be found, to reinvent their lives in pursuit of some truth or ideal, often falling prey to the thousands of others vying for the chance to define reality for themselves and everyone around them. Where love can become loss as soon as a fault line shifts and the ground underfoot splits open. How is the individual, already so fragmented, supposed to reconstitute itself within such a landscape? Is it even possible? "Using the internet to escape my body has appealed to me from the beginning," writes Arthur Katrina. "Remember how we wanted another world?" (GJ)
dampxerox@gmail.com / mbdx.life

SIEMBRA
22 pgs
Half photo zine, half *suuuuuper* short story zine. Stories are mostly one paragraph long and are about race and the author's own dealings with other people's perceptions. A few cute doodles, some really adorable, endearing shots of what I assume are the author's family, some religious art and that's about it. Simple, cute, kinda gets real, but ends real quick. (DZ)

SOLO MIRO COMO TU (I ONLY LOOK LIKE YOU)
$5 / 20 pgs
Saturated, harsh and loving zine about the author's relationship with their Salvadorean mother and their childhood growing up white-passing and trans in California. Typewritten on stationery with the edges ripped, interspersed with family photos, and framed heavy with toner. Released via the creator's sad kid graffiti punk collective distro Rad Breath, this zine is intimate, honest and rendered with care. (AK)
radbreath@yahoo.com

#SNATCHPOWER #2
$7 / 36 pgs
A compilation zine from the "post-apocalyptic Afrofuturistic feminist podcast & artist collective straight outta the L.A. underground," *#Snatchpower* features a range of musings and screeds that are bold, sex-positive, and strongly womanist. In this zine—the second one from the collective—poetry, song lyrics, autobiographical essays, a string of social media replies, black-and-white photos, and illustrations touch on issues such as pregnancy and new motherhood, men's shortcomings in the bedroom, gender and racial identity, family, religion, and more. This zine is a fierce expression of black women who are unafraid to push the boundaries. Its cover image—two topless black women donning pink boxing gloves—will give readers of this zine a pretty good idea of what they're in for. (GM)
hashtagsnatchpower@gmail.com

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #258
32 pgs
I really love Finnish punk, and this is a Finnish punk zine. I really can't tell you any more than that, because I don't know that particular language. I only barely know my own language and this zine is not written in that language. I can tell you that this zine has been going since 1989, there are a bunch of pictures of punx with charged hair, there's an anti-fascist ad, there are three tons of reviews, and a few interviews. Even the "translated" version of their seriously outdated website wasn't much help. Looks more in line with *MRR* and *Trust* than say *Razorcake*, but if you don't speak the language, it's just cool pictures of punks and skulls and shit. (DZ)
Toinen Vaihoehto, PL 25, 37501 Lempäälä

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #151
$2 / 52 pgs
Whether you're impressed at the commitment of someone putting out 150 issues of a zine out of Columbia, MO for 25 years, or wish he would've paid more attention to photo editing and spruced up the layout even a little during that time, here we have the 25 year commemorative issue, which takes a look back via snippets of interviews with Fugazi and DOA, a not-quite-as-old Avengers / Pansy Division show review, and I jumped up in my seat when I saw the Gil Scott-Heron show review from 1993 (in which Boone compares Vanilla Ice to Billy Ray Cyrus, and having no idea how prophetic that was going to be with the latter's offspring). As far as current day stuff: there's a decent interview with Lawrence's Psychic Heat, numerous show and record reviews, and other goodies. (DG)
PO Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205-1444

TRUST #186
€3 / 66 pgs
Whoa, this zine got an experimental, arty layout makeover. This time around, we get interviews from Sneeze Attack, Penny Rimbaud, Lebenden Toten, Zonenpunk, and Alice Bag. Other than that, there's the usual reviews and some nice photos! (DG)
Dolf Hermannstadter, Postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, Germany

UNVERIFIABLE COMICS #2
$2 / 16 pgs
Wacky political commentary comix from rural Vermont. I have a soft spot for this kind of freak in the woods of New England-type rag, though it's hard to tell where exactly the creator is coming from (are they a hippie? are they a grandfather? are they a teenager?). Getting accosted outside the co-op about fake news vibes. Two dollars gets you a copy of this zine plus a bumper sticker of a drawing of a little guy saying "space is only 20 miles up!" (AK)
PO Box 345, Putney VT 05346

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More to come in 2018!

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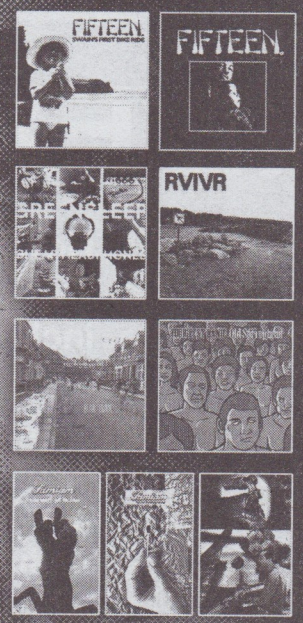

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DEADLINE EXTENSION

April 3, 2018 will mark twenty years since Tim Yohannan, the founder of *Maximum Rocknroll*, died. We wish to honor the complexity of his legacy by running your stories about him, both good and bad, as well as any high resolution photos you may have of him, as a tribute to his life.

However, Tim Yo's passing is a mere two days after April Fool's day, and an inclusion of his story in the April 2018 issue (our April Fool's issue) would mean its inclusion amongst items that may be a little less serious. So we are moving the deadline so that it can be included in a regular issue.

The new deadline is March 5, 2018.
Send your photos and/or your anecdotes about Tim Yohannan to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com
Submissions from Green Day will be used as toilet paper.